

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE

Farm co-op sets example of hard work, discipline in Cuba

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VOL. 62 NO. 10 MARCH 16, 1998

50,000 rally against Serb army terror in Kosovo

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

More than 50,000 people marched in the streets of Pristina, Kosovo, March 2 to protest the slaughter of 24 ethnic Albanian villagers during a sweep by Serbian cops and paramilitary units. The protesters chanted, "We want peace." Police charged them with water cannons, tear gas, and batons, injuring many civilians.

The next day another 50,000 people assembled in Likosane, Kosovo, to bury the slain villagers, chanting "UCK! UCK! UCK!" — the Albanian acronym for the Kosovo Liberation Army. The bodies were draped in Albanian national flags, reflecting an upsurge in the struggle to establish an independent state in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. Albanians make up 90 percent of the 2 million people there. The UCK, which is waging an armed struggle for independence, has organized a series of attacks against Serb authorities in recent months.

The Serb forces, backed by helicopters, launched a two-day military assault February 28 in response to an attack by UCK rebels near the village of Likosane. Two policemen and five guerrillas were killed in the confrontation. "We were in the room trying to protect ourselves when a helicopter opened fire on the village," said Sefer Nebiu, who was wounded. "Armored personnel carriers began to shoot and finally the police units arrived, all with heavy weapons."

Peasants in Qirez said Serb helicopter gunships shot at farmers running for cover and machine-gunned houses February 28. Armored personnel vehicles demolished

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'Militant' announces further sales campaigns

BY NAOMI CRAINE

"We had our best week so far in the month of February, selling 75 copies of the *Militant*, eight copies of *New International*, 12 *Perspectiva Mundials*, and seven of the booklet *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba*," writes Angel Lariscy from Miami. These were sold from tables in the Black community, other working-class neighborhoods, a couple of campuses, and at various political events. "Members of the International Association of Machinists at three workplaces sold seven *Militants*, three copies of *Perspectiva Mundial*, two copies of *New International*, and a Che booklet."

In fact, sales worldwide of the *Militant* last month were at their highest level in two years, reports the paper's business manager, Maurice Williams. "The last time bundles were so high was in March 1996, when Washington stepped up its threats against the Cuban revolution after the Cuban air force shot down two planes flown by right-wing provocateurs from Miami who invaded Cuban air space," he said.

To keep up the momentum of these sales, supporters of the socialist press are extending by two weeks the campaign to sell single

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Washington keeps up provocations in Iraq

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Clinton administration continues its preparations for launching a military assault against Iraq, while pressing to trample on that nation's sovereignty. A resolution approved March 2 by the 15-member United Nations Security Council sets the stage for more provocations by Washington to justify bombing raids. "With today's Security Council resolution," said UN secretary general Kofi Annan, "the government of Iraq fully understands that if this effort to insure compliance through negotiation is obstructed by evasion or deception, as were previous efforts, diplomacy may not have a second chance."

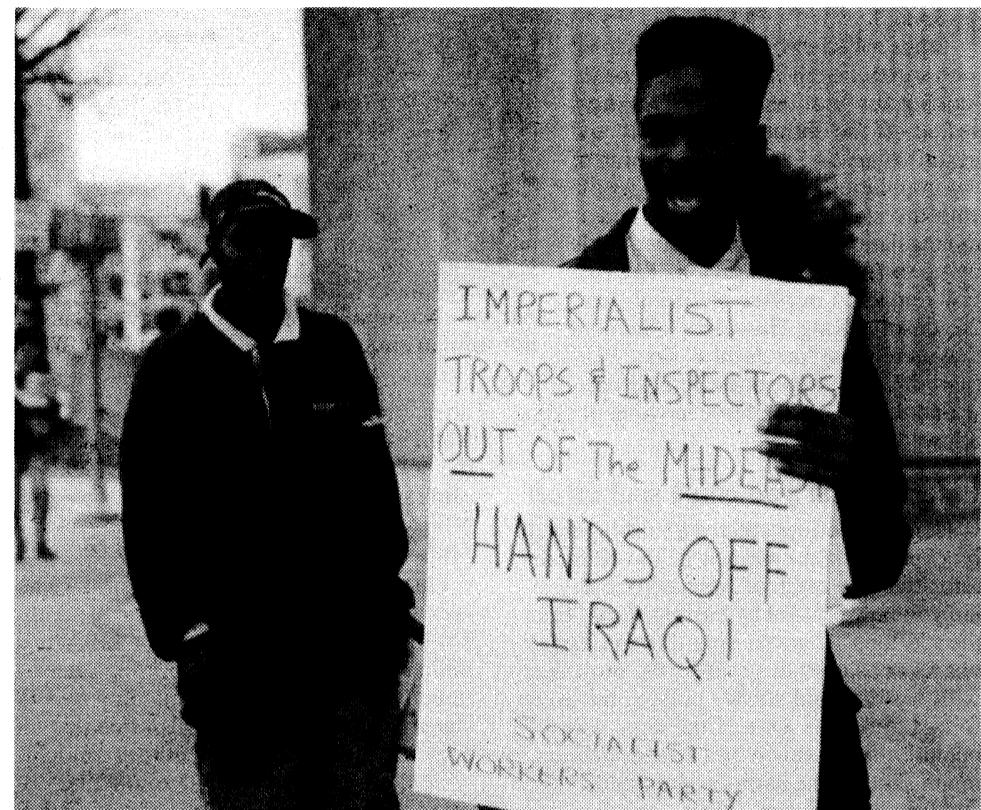
After the Security Council vote U.S. president William Clinton declared, "Iraq must make good its commitment to give the international inspectors immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any suspect site, any place, any time."

The Security Council resolution, sponsored by London and Tokyo, demands "immediate and full compliance by Iraq without conditions or restrictions" with the inspections agreement brokered by Annan and signed by Iraqi officials at the gunpoint of an impending bombardment by Washington. "Any violation would have severest consequences," the resolution warns.

Baghdad "should be under no illusion," Clinton declared March 3. "The meaning of 'severest consequences,' is clear. It provides the authority to act if Iraq does not turn the commitment it has now made into compliance."

"We sought from the very beginning the clearest possible message, and we don't think you can be clearer than when you say 'severest consequences,'" added State Department spokesman James Rubin. "Those are clear diplomatic code words for military action."

UN inspections of alleged military sites — Continued on Page 14



Young Socialists member Paul Cornish, right, at picket line in Atlanta February 26.

'No' vote on Caterpillar contract strengthens labor

One day after the tentative pact between the UAW and Caterpillar was announced, the February 14 *New York Times* opened a front page article with: "In what could be a blow to America's traditional, smoke-stack worker unions, the United Automobile Workers today endorsed a proposed contract

with Caterpillar to end the longest labor dispute of the decade."

But what "could be" was not to be. Much to Caterpillar's surprise — "shock" is how one big-business magazine put it — the contract was soundly rejected by 58 percent of the membership. What began as an anticipated funeral hymn for Cat workers became a reaffirmation that these union fighters are alive and well, and stronger too. The "longest labor dispute of the decade" is far

EDITORIAL

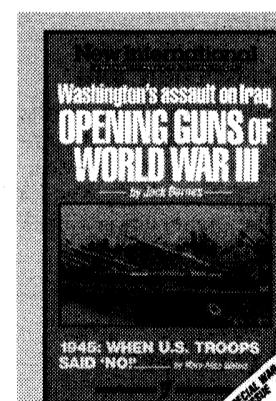
from over.

After going through two strikes, lasting a total of two years, and having worked without a contract since 1991, UAW members have proven that they are not defeated. And this hasn't gone unnoticed in the labor movement. For example, *Militant* supporters from Des Moines visited the J.I. Case plant gate in Burlington, Iowa, March 3 and sold 26 copies of the paper that featured the front-page article on the UAW rejection of the Caterpillar contract. Workers there were particularly interested in the struggle at Caterpillar, since their UAW contract expires at the end of this month.

Caterpillar was "disappointed" with the vote outcome, hoping it could finally put its "bitter labor troubles behind it," as the March 9 issue of *Business Week* stated. The big-business press also had hopes that the contract would be approved and would represent a counterblow to the strike victory against UPS by the Teamsters union last August.

"The agreement stands in stark contrast to the triumph scored last summer by United

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Opening Guns of World War III

Washington's Assault on Iraq

Jack Barnes

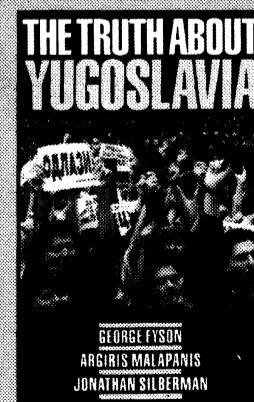
The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New International* no. 7. Available in English, French, Spanish, and Swedish. \$12.00

The Truth about Yugoslavia

Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention

George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis, and Jonathan Silberman

Examines the roots of the carnage in the Yugoslav workers state, where the U.S. and European powers are intervening militarily to advance their competing interests. Explains how groups of would-be capitalists — fragments of the former Stalinist regime — are fighting a war for territory and resources. \$8.95



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Jordanians: 'Hands off Iraq!'

Defying a government ban, people poured into the streets of Ma'an, Jordan, February 20 to protest the U.S.-led war preparations against Iraq. Riot cops, sent in by the Jordanian government to squash the demonstration, met heavy resistance. Police broke up the action, killing one protester. This provoked three even larger confrontations the next day. The government imposed a curfew on citizens at midnight February 21, cutting off electricity, phone lines, and preventing people from leaving their homes for any reason, even to get food.

Tanks rolled through Ma'an as local authorities began sweeps supposedly looking for "riot instigators." Soldiers sealed off the entrance to the city and began organizing a forced disarming of the population. About a dozen people were arrested and charged with "undermining national security" — punishable by up to five years in prison. The curfew remained in place as of February 26, despite King Hussein's statement that there were "no clashes" since February 22. Telephone lines were still cut, with only two hours of free movement a day allowed.

Palestinians: you can't seal us off

Israeli authorities erected a yard-high wall blocking off the entrance to the Kalandia refugee camp north of Jerusalem. Palestinian youth responded by hurling stones from the rooftops at cars passing through. Israeli border cops tried to suppress the protesters with tear gas and rubber bullets, but were forced to retreat. One of the cops was left behind, pinned down at a Palestinian auto repair shop by the barrage of projectiles. He and the couple dozen officers sent to rescue him then began firing live bullets. Palestinians, forced off the roofs, fought cops with their fists. At least one young Palestinian was jumped by the border patrol and beaten to the ground.

Negotiations around the Israeli government's pullout from occupying the West Bank territory, is a "dialogue of the



African National Congress supporters protest outside court in January during P.W. Botha's earlier appearance before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in George, South Africa.

deaf," Palestinian Authority spokesman Nabil Aboudeneh said. Only 3 percent of the land in the West Bank is under full Palestinian control.

Lebanese guerrillas retaliate

Guerrilla fighters from Hezbollah — who seek to end the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon — attacked one of Tel Aviv's military outposts February 26, killing at least three Israeli soldiers and wounding two. A statement from Hezbollah reported that all fortifications and some military vehicles were destroyed at the Blatt compound, located three miles inside of Lebanese territory.

On February 22 Israeli warplanes made 12 air strikes, bombing Iqlim al-Tiffah — a Lebanese province Israel says is a "guerrilla stronghold" — nine times in the morning and again in the evening. Since 1985 Tel Aviv has organized and maintained more than 4,000 occupation troops on 395 square

miles — that is 10 percent — of Lebanese land.

More apartheid cops exposed

Gen. Nic Janse van Rensburg, a high-ranking police official under the South African apartheid system, testified during a Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing February 25 that Louis LeGrange, top police minister at the time, gave explicit orders to "neutralize" antiapartheid activists. He also told the commission — designed to reveal the brutal crimes carried out under apartheid rule — that Harold Snyman, the former cop commander in the Eastern Cape, authorized the 1985 assassinations of Mathew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkonto, and Sicelo Mhlauli, also known as the "Cradock Four." They were each stabbed, shot, and then burned. Snyman is also facing the commission on the 1977 death of black rights leader Steve Biko. He is applying for amnesty.

Johan van Merwe, once South Africa's highest-ranking police official, is standing trial in Pretoria for torturing Stanza Bopape to death in 1988. He denies giving it the OK, but admits hiding the killing. Meanwhile P.W. Botha, the former apartheid ruler, plead innocent before the Truth Commission February 23 and accused the commission of being "prejudiced." About 100 antiapartheid activists demonstrated outside the hearing in George, South Africa.

Turkey gov't probes new ban

The Turkish government's ban on the Welfare Party, which won the largest number of seats in Parliament in the last election, became official February 22. Ankara immediately froze the organization's bank

accounts and raided its offices to seize computers, records, and other materials.

Many leaders of the Welfare Party, generally described as pro-Islamic, joined the newly formed Virtue party, which Turkish officials are already considering legal action against. One Welfare leader Sevki Yilmaz, who the Turkish government wants to put on trial, is in Germany and reportedly seeking asylum. Former prime minister and Welfare Party top Necmettin Erbakan was barred from political office for five years along with the ban on the party. Government prosecutors are looking to try him on subversion charges that would jail him for up to three years.

250,000 health workers strike in Romania

A two-week strike of 250,000 Romanian health-care workers wrested a 30 percent wage increase from the bosses who initially offered a 25 percent raise. "If we had not protested and gone on strike, we wouldn't have got at least half of what we demanded," said Adrian Birea, a Sanitas union official.

Thousands of health-care workers rallied in the capital in mid-February demanding higher pay and improved health benefits. Nurses make about half of the average monthly wage.

FBI anthrax hoax is exposed

FBI agents burst into a medical clinic in Las Vegas February 18 and arrested two men on charges of possession of biological toxins for use as weapons. Cops claimed they were tipped off by an informer that Larry Harris and William Leavitt Jr. had deadly anthrax and were planning to use it. The arrest was based on hearsay. As it turns out the chemical they had was an anthrax-based veterinary vaccine. The media played up Harris' alleged involvement in right-wing, white supremacist groups to justify undemocratic procedures and allegations of a "terrorist threat."

After the case was exposed as a hoax, cops still kept the men in "custody pending further investigation" and a court hearing. Finally charges were dropped and on February 23 Leavitt was released. The authorities still detained Harris, however, on unrelated charges. Asked if the FBI would do anything differently in retrospect, Las Vegas top cop Robert Siller said, "absolutely not."

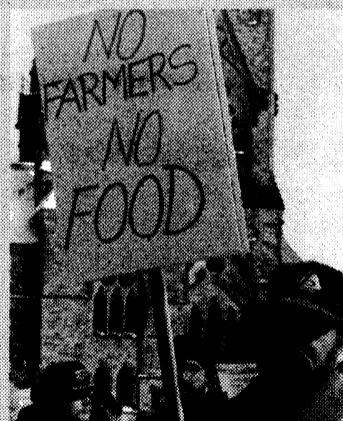
— BRIAN TAYLOR

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Washington's drive to expand NATO is aimed at Russian workers state

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted overwhelmingly March 3 to approve a proposal to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by taking into membership three former Soviet bloc countries. The vote on the measure, which now goes to the U.S. Senate for ratification, has renewed debate in ruling-class circles over how best to weaken and eventually overturn the workers state in Russia and reestablish capitalism there and in the rest of the region.

This debate highlights the fact that Moscow is the real target of Washington's war moves against Iraq. By bringing the regimes in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary into NATO, the U.S.-dominated military alliance would stretch to the Polish border with Russia, as well as the former republics of Ukraine and Belarus.

"The U.S. should heed the Russian bear's ever-louder growls," warned an item in the March 9 issue of the *National Review* magazine. The right-wing weekly said that a "series of apparently unrelated events in the former Soviet Union suggests the emergence of a newly aggressive Russian policy." It pointed to "reports in the *Washington Post* that Russia made a deal to sell technology capable of producing biological weapons to Iraq."

The article claimed Moscow was behind the ouster of Armenian president Levon Ter-Petrosian in February and an assassination attempt on Georgian president Eduard Shevardnaze, "who has resisted efforts by Russia to dominate his small country."

"There is the growing danger posed by rogue states with dangerous weapons. There are still questions about the future of Russia," declared U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright in her remarks at a February 24 hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She was listing her reasons for maintaining the NATO military structure while testifying in favor of its expansion.

"Our disagreements with Russia, especially about the Middle East and Gulf, have come about because of the manner in which Russia is defining its national interests in that part of the world," she added. "We need to remain vigilant and strong, militarily and economically."

Could unleash uncontrolled forces

A significant minority of the U.S. ruling class is nervous about the political forces the Clinton administration's course may unleash. "With NATO forces likely to move hundreds of miles closer to its border, Russia has already placed greater reliance on its nuclear weapons as a first line of defense," stated a *New York Times* editorial March 1. "NATO expansion would bring no discernible gain," because of the risk of Moscow failing to complete "its transition to ... a market economy," the big-business daily warned.

Other capitalist spokespersons also voiced their disagreements. "We harbor grave reservations about the pending expansion and the direction it points," wrote former Democratic Senator Samuel Nunn and Brent Scowcroft, national security adviser in the Ford and Bush administrations, in an op-ed piece in early February. "A military alliance is not a club," they chided, adding that "the Administration's rhetoric and policy risk converting NATO into an organization in which obligations are diluted and action is enfeebled."

Despite these hesitations from bourgeois figures, Jesse Helms, Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called for an "overwhelmingly positive" vote in the Senate to expand the imperialist military alliance to include the regimes of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

The foreign ministers from the aspiring NATO member states visited several senators February 10 to push for ratification of the expansion plan. The next day U.S. president William Clinton formally asked the Senate to approve the plan adding the three countries to the NATO war machine in 1999.

Washington is using its war moves in the Persian Gulf to prepare these regimes for future military action, including against the workers and peasants in Russia. "When I met with the foreign ministers of our three



Map of the Middle East and Caspian Sea regions. Poland and the Czech Republic lie to west of Belarus and Ukraine.

prospective allies two weeks ago, I asked them to stand by our side" in the Mideast, Albright said at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing. "If we have to take military action they will be with us. The bottom line is Poland, Hungary, and the Czech republic are already behaving as loyal allies."

All three governments participated in Washington's 1991 assault against the Iraqi people and Poland's deputy foreign minister Radek Sikorski recently declared his government was prepared to send 216 troops to the Persian Gulf.

NATO was founded in 1949 with the aim of assembling a military force that could be used against the struggles of workers and farmers around the globe and for containing and eventually overthrowing the workers states in the Soviet Union and elsewhere if the opportunity arose. Washington led the imperialist alliance, codifying its immense economic and military superiority in Europe in the aftermath of World War II.

Half a century later and more than six years since the breakup of the USSR, the U.S. rulers and their imperialist allies in Europe have still been unable to reestablish capitalism anywhere in Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union.

"Who lost Russia?" was the headline of Patrick Buchanan's February 18 column. "Seven years ago, the romance of the age was between America and a Russia newly liberated from Leninism. Today, Boris Yeltsin blusters that U.S. strikes on Iraq could ignite a 'world war,' as Russia ships missile technology to Tehran and establishes a 'strategic partnership' with China," the ultrarightist politician wrote.

Buchanan placed most of the blame for a "rise of anti-Americanism in Russia" that "is a strategic disaster" on the policies of the Clinton administration. NATO enlargement will guarantee "a series of crises in the next century that will mean either war or humiliation for the United States," he added.

Powder keg in Caspian basin

The Caspian Sea region, considered one of the world's richest sources of oil and gas, is another powder keg. Russian officials "are especially displeased to see Western oil companies, mainly American, moving in on the prize by making deals with little nations that not long ago were Moscow's pawns," noted the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* February 19. Accusing the Kremlin of "dirty work in the Caucasus," the financial daily asserted, "We haven't heard the last of troubles in this one-time hunting preserve of Soviet thugs."

According to London's *Financial Times*, Russian groups are accused of masterminding a February 9 assassination attempt on Georgian president Eduard Shevardnaze, supposedly to thwart the laying of a pipeline across the country. Shevardnaze's motorcade was hit by rocket grenades and automatic weapons fire as it traveled through the capital city of Tbilisi. Moscow has denied any involvement in the assault.

In Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian resigned as president February 3 under a storm of protests over his endorsement of a U.S.-backed plan to end a territorial dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave inside neighboring Azerbaijan. The proposal would require Armenian Karabakh forces to cede six regions of Azerbaijan they captured while fighting for independence from that country. Imperialist "peacekeeping" troops would then move into the region and the status of Nagorno-Karabakh would be decided later.

Washington pushes pipeline deals

The Clinton administration is pressing to advance U.S. oil giants' investments in Caspian Sea region and deepen Washington's military presence there. The Chevron Corp. and Mobil Corp., members of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, have frozen funds for a 900-mile pipeline that would transport some 1.4 million barrels of

oil a day from the Tengiz oil field in Kazakhstan through Russia to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, Russia. The oil consortium includes the governments of Russia and Kazakhstan.

Seeking an alternative route that would bypass Russia and go instead to Turkey, a member of NATO, Chevron, and the British-based Caspian Transco signed a contract with the Georgian government March 2 to construct a pipeline to transport crude oil from Kazakhstan through Azerbaijan and Georgia. The president of Azerbaijan has signed several oil contracts with foreign investors, while establishing links with the International Monetary Fund.

U.S. embassies in the region laid the groundwork to press for the Caspian oil deals. The government of strategically located Georgia received \$113 million in U.S. aid last year. "When the Russians say, 'the U.S. is trying to kick us out of the Caucasus,' we say 'The U.S. plays the role of regional power that supports freedom and independence,'" declared Archil Gegeshidze, foreign policy adviser to Georgian president Shevardnaze. Russian soldiers are still stationed in Georgia and Armenia. Last September 500 U.S. troops from the 82nd Airborne Division participated in a week-long joint exercise in Kazakhstan.

One of the Clinton administration's justifications for its military buildup in the Persian gulf is the claim that Baghdad has stocks of biological weapons. The U.S. media recently floated the story that Moscow conducted a deal to deliver biological agents to Iraq.

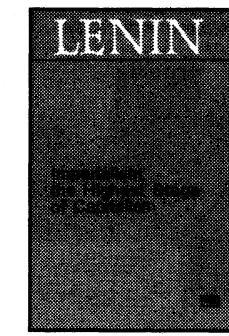
The ABC News program "Prime Time Live" aired an interview February 25 with a Russian defector who claimed Moscow is operating a program to study "offensive biological weapons agents" under the pretext of conducting defensive research. In addition, the *New York Times* published an article February 14 alleging that Russian scientists "have genetically engineered a new form of anthrax" that could be used as a weapon against U.S. troops.

Meanwhile, Clinton signed a "charter of partnership" with the governments of the three Baltic countries — Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — on January 16. The document pledges Washington's support for their application to join NATO. "America is determined to create the conditions under which Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia can walk through that door," the U.S. president stated.

Last July the pro-imperialist regime in Estonia hosted the largest military exercise led by NATO in the Baltic countries so far. Some 2,600 soldiers participated in "Baltic Challenge 97." Most of the troops were from the United States. At a NATO meeting in Madrid, Estonian president Lennart Meri was asked why it was necessary to expand the imperialist alliance. He replied, "It is said that communism is dead but no one has yet seen the corpse."

New International no. 10

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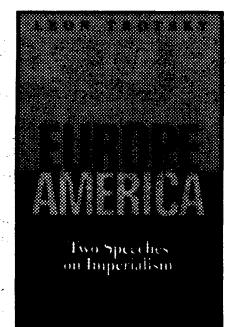
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Pathfinder digitization project is off and running

Print shop prepares for computer-to-plate machinery

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

NEW YORK — The project to put all of Pathfinder's books and pamphlets into digital form so that they may be reprinted more quickly and with less labor is off and running. The steering committee of volunteers for the Pathfinder Digitization Project met in San Francisco on February 28 to take stock of where the project stands in its beginning stages.

There are now volunteers in 12 cities in the United States scanning and proofreading 18 books. These cities include Chicago, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, New York, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Boston, Atlanta, and San Francisco. Some of the books being worked on include *Speeches for Socialism* by James P. Cannon, *The Spanish Revolution* and *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, both by Leon Trotsky and *Understanding History and Democracy and Revolution*, both by George Novack. Most of these books will soon be out of print. To save costly reprinting expenses, Pathfinder supporters are putting these books in attractive formats and digital form to take advantage of new printing processes.

Volunteers in most of these cities have requested additional books to start working on. Supporters in Minneapolis; Miami; Tucson, Arizona; Greensboro; New Zealand; and the United Kingdom have also requested books and will be receiving them shortly.

In San Francisco, volunteer Jerry Gardner has begun formatting the first book of this project, *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky. Based on his experience formatting this book, he will teach others in the San Francisco Bay Area. In turn, they will teach Pathfinder supporters worldwide who are involved in the project.

Easy-to-use-templates

Toni Gorton, a member of the United Auto Workers who lives in Detroit, traveled to the Pathfinder building in New York February 27 to help out on the project. A long-time supporter of Pathfinder and a skilled graphic artist who has designed many Pathfinder books and covers over the past decade, Gorton spent three days here working with the Pathfinder staff on the design for several basic templates that will be used to format Pathfinder books and pamphlets. Having these templates will make it possible to maintain Pathfinder's high standards on reprints. The formatting of each book will go from being a task that requires experienced and skilled designers, to a detailed, but relatively unskilled technical task.

Drawing from the work that had already begun in Pathfinder's print shop to standardize the style of books, Gorton came up with

new design features based on several recently published Pathfinder titles. These new template designs combine an attractive and readable appearance with the maximum flexibility of use, eliminating time consuming and unnecessary steps that make a formatter's job more complicated.

To make Pathfinder titles easier to read, Gorton helped come up with basic fonts, or styles of type, that are most appropriate for today's printing technology.

The work of volunteers around the world is an important part of the efforts being made in the print shop to reorganize the production process, including through the acquisition of new machinery to significantly reduce labor time.

The main purpose for getting the new machinery, as with all decisions regarding the print shop, is to better meet the needs of Pathfinder Press, which has as its central goal the publishing and distribution of books and pamphlets that are irreplaceable in the political and cultural development of the working-class.

New booklet hot off presses

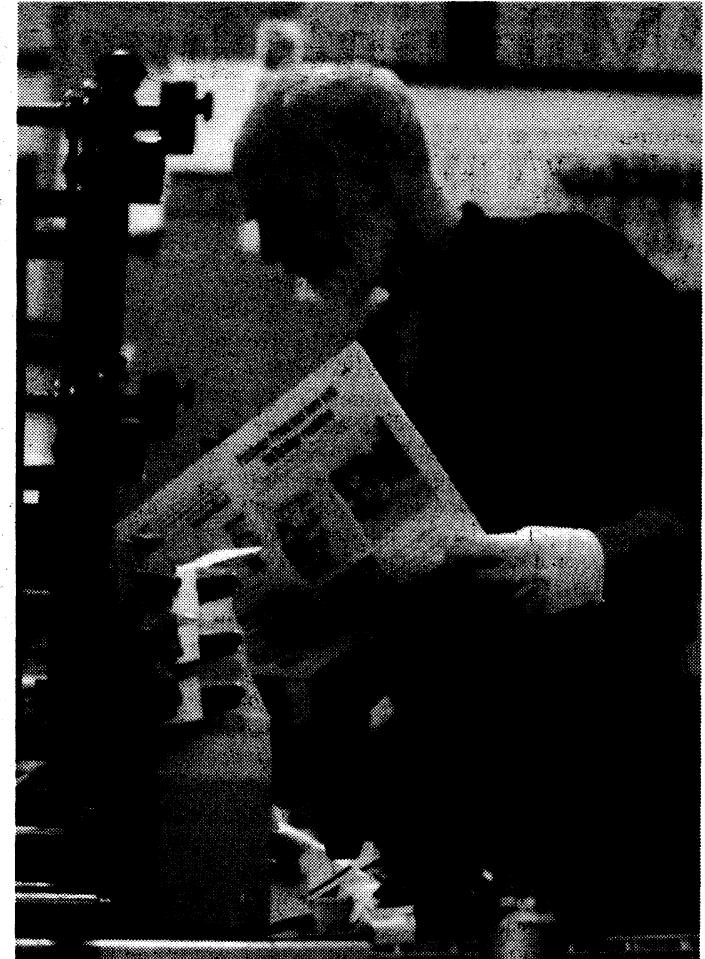
The newest title off the presses is *Pathfinder Press was born with the October Revolution: A publishing house for working-class fighters that lets revolutionary*

ers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters. The booklet, now available from Pathfinder for \$8, explains the past, present, and future of the print shop in a period of the ongoing decline of capitalism worldwide, as workers around the world — from the Caterpillar workers in the United States to toilers in Germany — are drawing lines in the sand, refusing to be pushed back any further. It is the third booklet produced in the last two months.

Clearing the way to work productively

Members of the print shop staff have visited several print shops on the East Coast to view the latest computer-to-plate (CTP) technology to learn how to implement it at Pathfinder's print shop.

"At the same time, we can't just bring in



Militant/Joshua Carroll

Folding Pathfinder was born with the October Revolution in Pathfinder's print shop March 1.

prepared to increase productivity on the presses and in the bindery, we will not be able to make full use of this advanced technology. So we are taking measures to improve our methods of organizing production and training new staff."

The print shop is minimizing all work that calls for labor intensive typesetting and striping.

The bindery staff is upgrading the level of cleanliness in the factory and strengthening the habits of regular maintenance and improvement of machinery. After every morning production meeting, the staff organizes a cleanup of the bindery and the outside lot and sidewalk.

Chris Hoeppner, who organizes Pathfinder's print shop, made the point that "production rates are a tool that if accurately kept provide the objective criteria necessary to gauge how well the work is being done, and the areas of work where more training is needed to qualify on the machines."

Paul Pederson, one of the shop's newest staff members explained the role of *machine crews* at a recent bindery department meeting. "These crews are the basic unit of production ... designed to keep accurate production rates, train and qualify new staff on the machines," and to take charge of machine maintenance. "They must meet at least once a week to discuss their progress and make decisions on production. If a problem arises, the crew may need to meet an additional time to generalize the experience among all the operators," Pederson said.

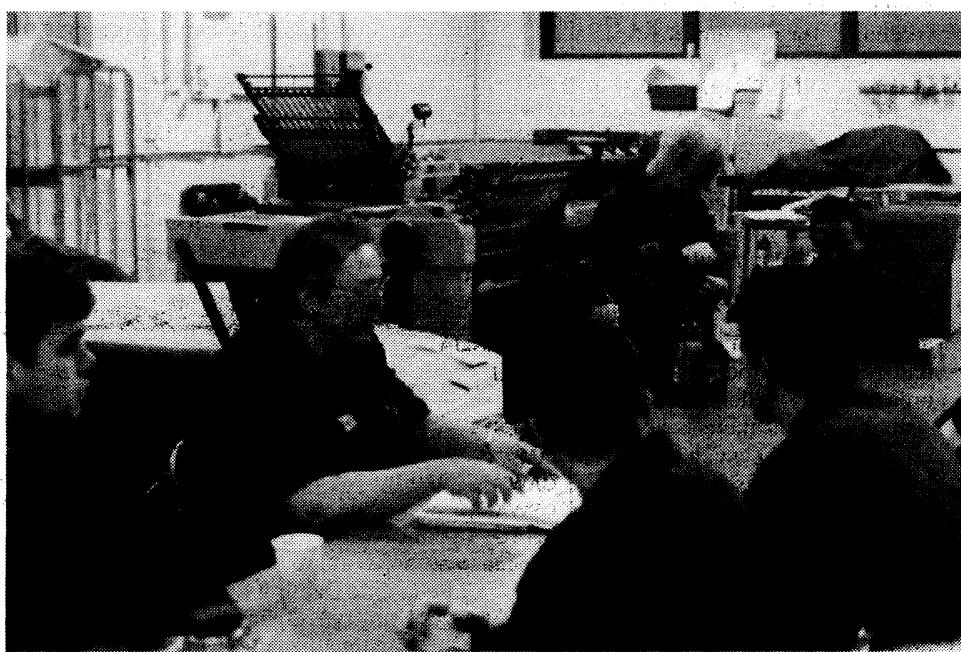
"At our next crew meeting, we will discuss production rates on each machine," added binder operator Peter Thierjung. "Each job we do needs an operator's name attached, their individual rates, and notes of problems we faced running the job. Doing this will make it possible to gauge our productivity and measure the training of new people." Thierjung also raised the need to give inexperienced workers "hands-on training with time to actually work" on the machines and be challenged to produce at rate.

José Aravena, who organizes the bindery, said, "How do we make a smoother operation? Are there steps we can streamline or improve? The entire bindery has to play a role in asking and answering these questions."

Workers in the bindery discussed making a checklist of tasks in which every new person needs to be competent. The checklist, along with attention to keeping production and scrap rates, can speed up training times and make it easier to pinpoint skills that require more practice.

This week the *Militant* focused on steps that have been taken in the shop's bindery. In coming weeks the paper will cover steps being taken in other print shop departments to improve productivity and prepare the way for the advanced computer-to-plate equipment that will significantly reduce the amount of time and labor needed to produce Pathfinder books.

Tom Tomasko from San Francisco and Mike Taber contributed to this article.



Militant/Brian Taylor

Pathfinder print shop bindery staff meets March 2. The bindery staff is upgrading level of cleanliness in the factory and strengthening habits of regular maintenance.

leaders speak in their own words, a reprint of articles from the *Militant*, as well as a 1991 report, "Strengthening the propaganda production and political leverage of the communist movement" by Socialist Work-

the CTP machines," explained Juliette Montauk, the business manager for the print shop that produces Pathfinder books. "The CTP hardware will give us the potential to produce a lot of plates. But if we are not

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- Using computer-to-plate technology to revolutionize the preparation and printing of Pathfinder books
- Strengthening the propaganda production and political leverage of the communist movement

1991 report by Mary-Alice Waters

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Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba

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Article from the *Militant* newspaper on the 30th anniversary of the combat waged in Bolivia by Che and his comrades.

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'Militant' backers plan further sales efforts

Continued from front page

copies of the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial*; issue no. 7 of *New International*, featuring "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq"; and *Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade*, a recently published collection of articles reprinted from the *Militant*. Socialist workers and youth have raised their goals for these publications accordingly.

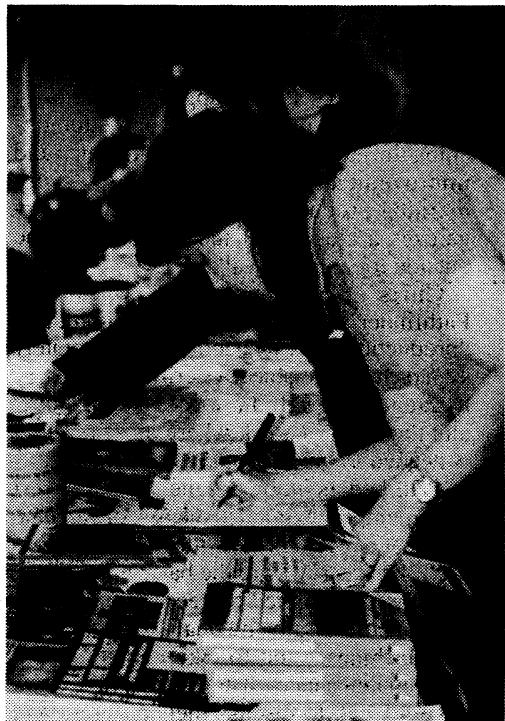
The single-issue sales campaign will run through the first weekend of an eight-week campaign to sell new subscriptions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, as well as copies of all the issues of the Marxist magazine *New International*. That sales drive will run from March 14 – May 10. Goals adopted by supporters in different cities and unions will be printed in the next issue.

From now until the end of the subscription drive, there will be a special offer on *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba and Pathfinder Press Was Born with the October Revolution*, another new booklet published by the *Militant*. Anyone who buys a new subscription or renewal for the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial* can get these pamphlets for \$5 each, nearly half off the \$8 cover price.

The stories below highlight some of the best sales at plant gates and on the job.

BY RAY PARSONS

United Auto Workers (UAW) members at Case Corp. bought 26 copies of the issue of the *Militant* featuring coverage of the recent contract rejection by UAW workers at Caterpillar. A



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Many of the 800 participants at a young feminist conference held February 27 – March 1 in Boston stopped to check out Pathfinder books and the *Militant*.

team of *Militant* supporters sold outside the plant gate for one hour at the company's Burlington, Iowa, factory March 3. Case is a major producer of agricultural and construction equipment.

Supporters of the *Militant* in Des Moines organized the sale after learning of contract talks now under way between Case and the UAW. The current agreement there, covering 3,300 workers at four plants in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin, expires March 29. An outfit in Des Moines has been recruiting scabs in the event of a strike.

The plant gate team caught the attention of many workers with signs saying, "U.S. Hands Off Iraq and the Teamsters Union," and "Read About the UAW Contract Fight at Caterpillar in The *Militant*."

The unionists explained that a big issue in the negotiations is opposition to forced overtime at the Burlington facility. The company has imposed mandatory overtime at the other three plants. A two-tier wage scale is already in place. Workers reported that scab recruiting is going on in Burlington and Peoria, Illinois, as well.

After buying a copy of the *Militant*, one worker thanked the team "for coming down to get our side — we don't get much support from other newspapers."

The next evening seven workers at the Bridgestone-Firestone tire plant in Des Moines bought copies of the same issue of the *Militant* from a team outside that factory.

Ray Parsons is a member of United Steelworkers

ers of America Local 310 in Des Moines.

BY GREG McCARTAN

Members of the Union of Needletraders, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) have substantially increased sales on the job through our campaign against imperialism and its wars.

In New York socialists are regularly selling to workers at the garment manufacturer Lord West, both on the job and through a once-a-week team outside the plant. Wendy Lyons, a presser at the company, was a candidate for the Socialist Workers Party in 1997. During her campaign many co-workers saw her on a televised debate.

Lyons has sold six copies on the job of *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba and Pathfinder Press Was Born with the October Revolution*, another new booklet published by the *Militant*. Anyone who buys a new subscription or renewal for the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial* can get these pamphlets for \$5 each, nearly half off the \$8 cover price.

The stories below highlight some of the best sales at plant gates and on the job.

It shows that there is an alternative to the system that breeds war and fascism — that there is a course to take power out of the hands of the war makers. The people who are buying the booklet are also the ones arguing against the U.S. war drive in the big debate going on at work. What is being demonstrated by the developments in Cuba gives them more confidence."

Gale Shangold, who works at Hollander Home Fashion in Los Angeles, reports selling three copies of *New International* no. 7 on the job. "I was discussing the politics of the magazine with a co-worker, and a woman who had bought a copy earlier came over to join the discussion." She was reading the article by Mary Alice Waters, "1945: When U.S. Troops said 'No!'" which relates the hidden story of the GI revolt at the end of World War II, and explained how good it was, Shangold said. This helped convince the first worker to get a copy of the magazine. A regular sale at the plant gate by socialists who work in other industries, has also been effective in getting *Perspectiva Mundial* into the hands of union members at Hollander. Six of Shangold's co-workers have purchased copies of the paper from the team.

Juan Antonio Villanueva, a Young Socialist and a presser at Hart, Shaftner and Marx in Chicago, says he began stepping up sales on the job, "by putting the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* down on the lunch table where I eat. Workers would stop by, look at the paper, and get into discussions. Several purchased copies. I found that as Washington increased the war drive against Iraq, a number of workers started looking for an explanation of what was going on. Some who had said they weren't

Campaigning against imperialism and war

February 1 – March 15 • New target percentage for fourth week = 67%

	Militant		NI		Ranking	PM		Che	
	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold		Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
AUSTRALIA	195	136	5	0	35%	6	9	20	20
CANADA									
Toronto	540	377	21	16	73%	8	4	*	14
Vancouver	300	190	13	9	66%	8	4	20	11
Montreal	162	91	*	10	*	21	13	*	7
Canada total	1002	658	*	35	*	37	21	*	32
ICELAND	40	30	3	2	71%			5	4
NEW ZEALAND									
Auckland	150	118	5	4	79%			1	20
Christchurch	100	59	4	3	67%			14	12
Wellington	30	19	1		32%			2	1
NZ total	250	177	9	7	74%			34	21
SWEDEN	92	86	8	6	84%	10	4	8	7
UNITED KINGDOM									
London	270	295	25	14	83%			40	25
Manchester	240	158	10	8	73%			20	14
UK total	510	453	35	22	76%			60	39
UNITED STATES									
Twin Cities, MN	220	228	20	10	77%	20	7	30	10
Los Angeles	500	357	40	32	76%	60	44	30	24
San Francisco	360	250	36	26	71%	30	5	40	24
Washington, DC	240	189	10	6	69%	12	5	20	7
Miami	300	197	32	23	69%	33	21	30	17
Boston	480	333	30	19	66%	20	15	25	12
New York	750	516	60	38	66%	90	61	100	37
Philadelphia	300	215	15	9	66%	10	4	25	13
Des Moines	325	226	14	8	63%	30	23	17	5
Cleveland	240	160	8	4	58%	8	4	20	10
Birmingham, AL	200	130	15	7	56%	17	9	12	7
Pittsburgh	200	124	13	6	54%	3	0	10	5
Atlanta	300	203	20	8	54%	30	17	30	7
Seattle	200	129	20	8	52%	5	2	25	5
Detroit	200	142	10	3	51%	10	5	25	9
Newark, NJ	480	337	40	12	50%	80	15	30	7
Chicago	600	403	25	8	50%	60	44	50	13
Houston	210	121	15	5	45%	20	6	15	5
U.S. total	6105	4260	423	232	62%	538	287	534	217

In the Unions

AUSTRALIA									
AMWU	24	19	3		40%			4	
CANADA									
IAM	36	50	5	2	89%			3	
CAW	8	6	1	1	66%			1	
USWA	44	32	12	7	66%	6	4	8	
UNITE	8	1			0%			1	
Canada total	96	88	19	10	72%	6	4	13	0
NEW ZEALAND									
EU	20	15	2	0	38%			2	
MWU	16	11	1	0	34%			2	
SFWU	4	2	1		25%			4	
NZ total	40	28	4	0	35%			2	
UNITED KINGDOM									
TGWU	28	33	5	4	99%			5	
RMT	16	13	3	2	74%			4	
AEEU	20	17	4	1	55%			4	
UK total	64	63	12	7	78%			13	2
UNITED STATES									
OCAW	88	51	14	12	72%			16	
IAM	160	116	35	24	71%	20	8	40	
UTU**	200	104	41	30	63%			28	
UAW	200	135	20	11	61%	7	11	30	
UFCW	32	16	7	4	54%	24	17	6	
UNITE	34	24	13	2	43%	22	19	16	
USWA	175	87	40	13	41%	15	9	25	
U.S. total	889	533	170	96	58%	88	64	161	51

* discussing new goal

** combined Militant and PM goal

Cities are ranked by the average percentage of *Militants* and *New Internationals* sold

AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU — Amalgamated Manufacturers Union; CAW — Canadian Autoworkers Union; EU — Engineers Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers

— YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD —

YS forms new chapter at Penn State campus

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY MARK GILSDORF

STATE COLLEGE, Pennsylvania — Four students here at Penn State have formed a chapter of the Young Socialists (YS). Martin Austermuhle, Adam Levenstein, Dave Lieberner and Jaimie Yurick form the newest unit of the communist movement. The group has been getting together regularly over the last few months and organizing a variety of activities.

On February 26 they helped to organize a protest against the U.S. war moves on Iraq. "There were three groups of students organizing a protest for the same day against war

with Iraq, independently of each other: Anti-Racist Action, the Young Socialists, and a coalition of unaffiliated youth," said Adam Levenstein, the organizer of the chapter. "So we called a meeting of the three groups and decided to organize a joint protest. About 30 people turned out and we're having a planning meeting March 3 to organize further actions."

The protest was covered in the campus newspaper, *The Collegiate*, and the local *Center Daily News* ran a photo of a YS member and other youth carrying a big banner that said "Hands Off Iraq!" The local NBC affiliate also ran a short story on the protest with an interview with Levenstein.

After the protest, members of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party set up a literature table on the campus and sold 13 single issues of the *Militant*, and got three names of people interested in the YS and protests against the war drive.

The Young Socialists chapter at Penn State gets a small consignment of Pathfinder

books and a bundle of five *Militants*. Last semester they set up literature tables two times a week. Austermuhle, who was born in Switzerland and grew up in Latin America, explained that what attracted him to the YS was reading its *Political Principles*, "in particular the parts about Cuba. I read a lot of Karl Marx and Che Guevara and when I met Adam I decided to join."

"We've organized a class on the *The Communist Manifesto*, and are projecting continuing with the class and tabling once classes resume after spring break," reported Austermuhle. Lieberner was attracted to a sign that said "U.S. Hands Off Iraq! No

blood for Oil!" on the front of a literature table last November and bought a copy of the *Militant*. Later he sat down with socialists at a local coffee shop and discussed joining the YS and the possibility a picket line protesting the war threats against Iraq.

Yurick, the most recent member, met the YS while the other three were tabling on campus and jumped on board in building the protest against war with Iraq. Levenstein had been a member of the YS in Pittsburgh and regularly helped socialists from Pittsburgh set up tables on campus. "We have four official members and a couple more people have asked to join," he reported.

YS T-shirts!

Two shirts to choose from.

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2. Stop Police Brutality.

Sizes include medium, large, and x-large. Available from the YS national office. 1-4 t-shirts, \$15 each; bulk orders of five or more, \$10 each. Shipping costs included.

Black farmers call action in Washington

BY KEN MORGAN

ENFIELD, North Carolina — "We need everyone in Washington D.C. at the court house on March 5," stated Gary Grant, organizer of the Second National Black Land Loss Summit held here February 19-22.

Some 100 people attended the summit.



Protest at U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., April 23, 1997. *Militant/Stu Singer*

Natives protest racist abuse in Canada

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER — More than 300 people, most of whom were Native, filled the Simon Fraser University Harbour Front campus lecture hall to overflow capacity February 9 to hear testimony from survivors of the residential school system that thousands of Native children were forced into from the 1880s through the 1980s. Residential schools were organized by churches of various denominations, with the collaboration of the federal government of Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Native children were taken from their homes to be "assimilated" by suppressing their culture, language, and identity.

At the meeting here, more than a dozen people who had been subjected to the residential system between 1940-70 described how students were punished for speaking their native language. Sexual abuse, murder, and beatings were also common at these schools in Port Alberni and other areas of British Columbia.

"The RCMP and the United Church got away with murder for decades," said Harriet Nahane from the Nuu-Chah-Nulth nation. Nahane said that in 1946, when she was 11, she witnessed the murder of a six-year-old fellow student, Maisie Shaw, by the school principal, Rev. A.E. Caldwell. "I heard him kick her, and she fell down the stairs. I went

to look — her eyes were open, she wasn't moving. They protected 'Reverend' Caldwell after he killed two children, Maisie Shaw and Albert Gray. But the truth is coming out." Nahane also explained that she and others were sexually abused at the school. "The residential school system was about land and resources and terrorizing us to do nothing about the theft of our land," Nahane said. "The church, with support of the government, put the residential schools on choice land away from the reserves so that they could take it for themselves."

Dennis Tallio from the Kwakiutl nation in Bella Bella, who went to Port Alberni School from 1962-67, explained that he had found the dead body of a sexually assaulted seven-year-old girl outside the school in 1965. "I found it strange that the RCMP told us not to say anything," he said. "Why would they keep this quiet?"

Harry Wilson a member of the Kwakiutl nation also described seeing the body of a dead girl at the Port Alberni school in 1967. "The principal, Victor Andrews, threatened to beat me if I told anybody," added Wilson. Wilson, Tallio, and 28 other Native survivors are plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the United Church and the Federal government of Canada. The lawsuit demands compensation and an apology for the abuse, brutality, and crimes committed by the United

Church authorities, Kevin Annett told the *Militant*. Annett was a United Church minister in the Port Alberni area for five years. He was fired in January 1995, two months after writing a letter to church authorities questioning the sale of land given temporarily to the church by Ahousaht elders and subsequently sold to forest company MacMillan Bloedel. Church authorities gave no cause for the dismissal.

"Lot no. 363 consists of 100 hectares of the most valuable stands of ancient rain forest red cedar on the west coast of Vancouver Island," Annett explained. "It is worth millions. Against the wishes of the Ahousaht elders, who had provided the land for the church to build a residential school, the lot was sold in 1953 for \$2,000 to the grandson of the church minister. The land was subsequently acquired by MacMillan-Bloedel in 1994 for nearly \$1 million. Not a penny has been returned to the Ahousahts."

"We are warriors," Natani Desjarlais, a Cree and leader of the Native Youth Movement, told the crowd. "This is a powerful meeting that ... opens up the possibility for us to reconquer our warrior spirit so that we can continue to fight for our rights, our dignity."

Ned Dmytryshyn is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 764.

that in January the government and the farmers agreed to attempt to mediate 12 test cases. The cases would form the bases for facilitating the resolution of hundreds of remaining complaints.

The March 5 court date will assess progress on those cases. Pigford added, "We are zero for nine." Nine of the twelve cases discussed so far have resulted in deadlock. Black farmers and their supporters, from as far away as Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Louisiana, have filled the courtroom at previous hearings showing their will and solidarity to fight for justice.

Participants at Black Land Loss Summit buy 'Militant,' books

BY STU SINGER

ENFIELD, North Carolina — The 100 Black farmers, landowners, workers, students, and others who participated in the Second National Black Land Loss Summit showed a great deal of interest in the *Militant* and Pathfinder books and pamphlets. Nine subscriptions to the newspaper were sold, one of them a one-year sub and two for six months. Another five single copies were sold, along with 37 Pathfinder titles.

The *Militants* were sold primarily around the issue of the war in Iraq. Black farmers leader Eddie Slaughter from Buena Vista, Georgia, renewed his subscription for six months and said it was a war for oil and against the Arab peoples. An environmental activist from Durham, North Carolina, bought a single copy of the paper but disagreed with the *Militant*, saying he thought war was unlikely but that the U.S. government would be doing the right thing if they decided to attack Iraq.

Sam Jackson, a young Black farmer who grows cotton in South Carolina, bought a one-year subscription and was interested in the *Militant*'s reporting about Cuba. "The Bay of Pigs was where the Cubans kicked the U.S.'s butt," he commented. "I want to find out more about Cuba. I think it's probably different than what they tell you all the time." David Singletary, who bought a six-month subscription, is from a North Carolina farm family that lost their land. He was interested in the coverage of the labor movement as well as the international scope of the *Militant*.

The Pathfinder books and pamphlets sold covered a wide-range of issues. They included seven copies of *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s* by Doug Jenness; one each of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes, *Problems of Women's Liberation* by Evelyn Reed, and *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'guerrilla'* by Harry Villegas; and three copies of *How Far We Slaves Have Come* by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro.

Meeting discusses women, Cuban revolution

BY NANCY COLE

PHILADELPHIA — "Women in Cuba: A Revolution within a Revolution" was the title of a program that attracted more than 80 people at the University of Pennsylvania campus February 12. The speakers were Johana Tablada, third secretary in the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., and Elizabeth Stone, an airline worker and editor of the Pathfinder book *Women and the Cuban Revolution*.

The meeting was sponsored by the Philadelphia Cuba Support Coalition, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Philadelphia chapter of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, and a number of groups at the University of Pennsylvania. These included the Greenfield Intercultural Center (GIC), Penn Women's Alliance, and the Caribbean and Latin American Students Association and African American Student Association at the Graduate School of Education. The audience was made up of students from the campus, workers, and local political activists, including a number from the Puerto Rican community. The meeting was chaired by Inez Ramos, Graduate Latino Program Coordinator at GIC.

"We're still far away from equality," began Tablada, who served on the national committee of the Federation of Cuban Women before joining Cuba's diplomatic corps in this country two years ago. "You can change the laws but it's difficult to change the mind," she said, describing through personal experience how her generation, which grew up after the 1959 revolution, is taking big steps in combating what she called the "macho idiosyncrasy." The next generation will take it even further, she said. Tablada cited several representative statistics that register women's progress in society, including that 23 percent of the Cuban parliament is made up of women and 49 percent of Cuban doctors are women.

After the 1995 United Nations World Conference of Women in Beijing, Tablada noted, Cuba was one of the first countries to sign its agenda for women's rights because prerequisites such as legal provisions for "maternity leave, equal pay, protection



Militant/Nancy Cole

Third secretary of the Cuban Interests Section Johana Tablada, left, and airline worker and editor of *Women and the Cuban Revolution* Elizabeth Stone, right, speak at a Philadelphia meeting on women in Cuba February 12.

for single mothers had been in place in Cuba for many years." She pointed to other statistics that measure Cuba's priorities: an infant mortality rate of 7.8 per 1,000 live births, which is the lowest in the Third World and is lower than Washington, D.C., for example. The maternity mortality rate is 2.2 deaths per 1,000 births. "If all of Latin America had a rate that low," Tablada said, "20,000 women would live every year" who now die during child birth.

The deep economic crisis that enveloped Cuba after the collapse of trade with the Soviet Union in the early 1990s hit women the hardest, she explained, since it was primarily women who had to contend with cooking through long blackouts and cleaning without soap. It is still difficult today, she explained, "but the terrible moment has passed."

But the new economic dynamic under way to help survive the crisis "could be a challenge to the laws and norms" of legal equality, she explained. There are 300 joint ventures with foreign companies under way in Cuba, Tablada said, and "these companies might not like women or Blacks; we have to watch this and talk about it." While Cuba needs to develop its economy and efficiency, "we have to take care that it won't undermine our ethical principles."

A problem that has accompanied the increase in tourism to Cuba is the reemergence of prostitution after its virtual elimination with the 1959 revolution. "If you go to Cuba, you will realize it is an issue again, but never of the dimension it had before 1959," Tablada said. "It is illegal. It is not advertised. There are no hot lines, no places where women can go and legally offer that ser-

vice — before the revolution there was one house after another. It is not what Cuba needs, and we don't need it to attract tourists."

One of the issues highlighted by the Pope's visit to Cuba is abortion. Stone, who is a member of the International Association of Machinists, began her remarks by noting that supporters of women's rights in the United States recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, which was the result of women organizing a fighting movement.

"By the year 1969, when our movement was just getting off the ground, women in Cuba had won many things, including legal, free abortion," Stone said. "We saw something else," she added. "Once Cubans won something — like maternity leave, child care, free health care, birth control, or abortion — there were no threats to take it away again. This was unlike the United States, where the minute the Supreme Court decision [legalizing abortion] came down, it was attacked. Over these 25 years we've had to keep fighting for this right."

Stone said there is a sustained ideological campaign against the idea of women's equality today, pointing to "the relentless charge that abortion is murder, that childcare is bad for children, that women don't really want to be part of the same dog-eat-dog world as men. The purpose is to keep our labor cheap, to keep our wages as low as possible by making us feel we can't be as serious or as full-time about our jobs as men. The purpose is also to divide workers, men from women."

Stone pointed out that attacks on women's rights and conditions are also taking place internationally, with the biggest effects on women in the Third World. She explained Cuba has been able to make so much progress precisely because it has broken out of a system dominated by those who have an interest in exploiting women.

"What does the Cuban revolution mean for us today?" Stone concluded. "First, that it is possible to win full equality for women. There is a path and a perspective that can lead to equality; Cubans have started along that path. And second, that the women's struggle has to be part of the workers movement; it has to be part of the kind of power that can only come when we unite all working people and fight for the rights of all."

Responding to reports during the Pope's visit of the high rate of abortion in Cuba, Tablada said, "We don't encourage abortion. We are against using it as a contraceptive method. There have been campaigns to reduce its use. But we are for the right of women or parents to decide."

One young man at the meeting asked Tablada to explain the little opposition to abortion given Cuba was heavily Catholic. She answered that Cuban Catholics may go to church but they don't abide by the Pope's ban on abortion and contraception. "The birth rate in Cuba was reduced dramatically because when women decide to work, they're not going to have 10 kids. They're going to have one kid, like in the industrialized countries."

Tablada invited those at the meeting to visit Cuba and talk with Cuban women themselves. She pointed to the International Women's Solidarity Conference in Cuba in April as an opportunity to do so.

Nancy Cole is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Australia: abortion rights attacked

BY JOANNE KUNIANSKY

SYDNEY, Australia — Two Perth doctors, Victor Chan and Ho Peng Lee, have been charged with attempting to "procure an abortion" — a charge that carries a maximum sentence of 14 years. Abortion is illegal in Western Australia under the Criminal Code unless the mother's physical or mental health is at risk. These prosecutions are the first in the state in almost 30 years.

Victor Chan is a well-known doctor who

has been performing abortions for more than 20 years. The prosecution stems from a police investigation that began 18 months ago after it was brought to their attention that a Maori woman was permitted by Chan to take her aborted fetus home for a "culturally appropriate burial." The woman involved has made no complaint to the police.

Chan said, "I was trying to be sensitive to the patient. They picked the wrong case because this was the perfect case of legal

abortion, where the patient was under enormous stress at the idea of having another child. I will vigorously defend the charge for the cause of all women."

On February 9, after failing to prevent the state prosecutor, John McKechnie, from going ahead with the charges, Scott Blackwell, the state president of the Australian Medical Association, recommended that doctors in Western Australia cease performing abortions immediately. Blackwell said, "The law is to be determined literally and that means that they and their patients are at risk of being charged under the laws as they stand."

"In reality as of this moment unless the woman's life is at risk then abortion is indeed illegal." The Australian Nurses Federation received legal advice that anyone involved in any way with abortions, including receptionists booking appointments, were at risk of being charged. Clinics around the state canceled dozens of abortions and hospitals were warned to stop terminations. Two West Australian women were subsequently hospitalized from injuries caused by attempting self-induced abortions.

In response, State Attorney General Peter Foss indicated that medical staff would not be prosecuted for performing abortions. Foss said, "I give the assurance that the policy on prosecutions will not differ from that which has applied in the last 20 years." Once Attorney General Foss's assurance was received in writing, doctors at West Australian public hospitals agreed to resume abortions.

Next month a private member's bill seeking to liberalize Western Australia's abortion laws is expected to be presented to state Parliament. Protests of 150 people on both sides of the abortion issue clashed outside Perth's Central Law Courts, where Chan and Lee appeared to be formally charged.

Forty people picketed in Sydney February 20 at an action called by the Women's Abortion Action Campaign, demanding that the charges be dropped against Chan and Lee and that all antiabortion laws be repealed.

Activists in Philadelphia protest embargo on Cuba

BY REBECCA ARENSEN

PHILADELPHIA — Shortly after Pope John Paul II left Cuba in January, a panel of religious and community activists spoke out here against U.S. Treasury Department harassment of those who traveled to Cuba on a 1995 trip.

Philadelphia city council member Angel Ortiz pointed to the television coverage of the Pope's visit. "With all the problems they have had, with all the things that the newspapers and media keep saying about the Cuban system and the government, you do not see the pictures of kids with malnutrition. They might have been in poverty," he continued, "but you did not see people going hungry."

Other participants in the January 28 news conference held at the national offices of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) were longtime Black community activist Father Paul Washington, Tom O'Rourke of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, Efrain Cotto of the Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia, labor and Puerto Rican community activist Wilfredo Rojas, Michelle Rief of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Richard Erstad, who is the coordinator of the Latin America.

Also speaking at the news conference was Cuba Support Coalition activist Nancy Cole, who received a letter from the U.S. Treasury Department last year demanding she submit information on her 1995 trip to the Cuba Lives! International Youth Festival. A February 5 *South Philadelphia Review* article reported, "According to the U.S./Cuban Trading Economic Council in New York, 18,750 Americans made unauthorized visits to Cuba in 1997." The article went on to quote Cole, "Obviously the U.S. government is not going to investigate or take action against nearly 19,000 people, but investigations like the one of myself do stand as efforts to intimidate and threaten those who would join the next delegation to Cuba."

The *Review* article reports that the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York has responded on Cole's behalf, arguing her right not to answer the questions on constitutional grounds. "A phone call to OFAC [Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Treasury Department] was not returned," notes the *Review*.

Rebecca Arensen is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

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Sierra Maestra farm co-op in Cuba sets example of hard work and discipline

BY JOSHUA CARROLL
AND PATRICK BROWN

MELENA DEL SUR, Cuba — During the potato harvest in mid-February, workers at the Sierra Maestra farm cooperative 40 miles east of Havana welcomed a team of *Militant* reporters. Cooperative members discussed steps they are taking to increase the yield and quality of their crops, to provide food and housing for their families, and to maintain security and discipline on the property of 20 caballerías (one caballería is about 33 acres).

Our visit began in the workers' meeting room. A number of awards proudly displayed along one wall indicated that this cooperative is considered a model in Cuba, with achievements centered on the discipline, initiatives, and hard work of its members.

In his welcoming remarks, Augustin Acosta, the president of the cooperative, explained that the Sierra Maestra UBPC (Basic Unit of Cooperative Production) is one of six cooperatives established by workers here in September 1993 following the decision to break up the previously existing state farm. This was part of a process, carried out primarily in 1993-94, through which the big majority of state farms were reorganized into UBPCs. The aim of this large-scale reorganization, initiated by the government, is to boost agricultural production by cutting back the top-heavy bureaucratic organization of the old state farms and providing direct individual incentives for workers to take more responsibility for the land they work and the food they produce. Unlike workers on state farms, UBPC members own their harvest.

Food-producing UBPCs, which make up a bit over half of the total number of cooperatives established in this process, sell a previously agreed upon portion of their harvest to the state at government-set prices. The surplus is generally sold by the UBPC at agricultural markets in the cities, at unregulated prices. The Sierra Maestra sells 80 percent of its produce to the state distribution agency; the remaining 20 percent is sold to its own members at preferential prices or on the open market. The cooperative owns the machinery it uses and purchases seed, fuel, fertilizer, and other supplies out of its revenues. The land remains nationalized and cannot be sold, rented, bequeathed, mortgaged, or used as collateral for loans.

The number of food-producing UBPCs in Cuba grew from 800 at the end of 1993 to 1,567 in mid-1997, involving by that time more than 122,000 rural workers, 114,000 of whom were cooperative members and the rest contracted labor. There are some 1,100 sugar-producing UBPCs in Cuba as well. UBPC members currently till 37 percent of Cuba's arable land not devoted to sugarcane. The scope of this reorganization of agriculture can be seen in the fact that in 1989 the Cuban state managed 78 percent of all agricultural land; by 1996 it managed less than 25 percent.

The creation of the UBPCs was prompted by the need to increase agricultural production, which fell precipitously in the early 1990s. This drop was a part of the broader economic crisis, referred to by Cubans as the Special Period, which was triggered by the loss of development aid and trade at preferential prices with the Soviet bloc countries. Prior to 1989 the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe accounted for 85 percent of Cuba's foreign trade. The abrupt end to these relations produced critical shortages affecting everything from industrial production to personal life. Between 1989 and 1994, food production declined by about one-third, and agricultural and livestock production plummeted by more than 50 percent. Among the reasons were the lack of fertilizers, pesticides, fuel and spare parts, as well as boots, machetes, and other essentials. This situation, which reached its lowest point in 1993 and the first half of 1994, was substantially aggravated by the U.S. government's nearly four-decade-long economic war against the people of Cuba.

An article by Eduardo Valenzuela in the October 1997 issue of the magazine *Cuba Business*, published in London, reported that "in 1993 the Department of Social Development of the Ministry of Economy and Planning [of Cuba] calculated that average daily consumption of a diet composed of 82 food products had declined from 2,845 to 1,863 calories. In June 1995 the government told the Secretary General of the United Nations that 'for the year 1993 the average daily Cuban diet was 60% lower in proteins than in 1989, 63% lower in fats, 67% lower

the organization of production. The new network of unregulated produce markets began operating in October 1994. For the financial year ending June 30, 1995, the Sierra Maestra registered a surplus of 230,000 pesos. There has been steady improvement since then, although Acosta projected that the coming year will show less progress due to recent storms that severely damaged the potato crop.

Although the large majority of UBPCs are showing signs of progress, the Sierra Maestra is one of a small number that have

kind of work." Acosta continued, "I am not talking about age necessarily. Some of the current cooperative members are 60 years old and older. At the same time there are youth who quit, telling me they can't handle working from sunup to sundown." In the past two years, he reported, the UBPC's retention rate has reached 80 to 85 percent.

Pedro Martínez, who is 60 years old, joined the cooperative a year and a half ago. Before that he was a truck driver in Havana. He said, "the hours here are long, but they are not as long as at my last job." Cooperative members generally work anywhere from 9 to 11 hours a day, six days a week, and half days on Sunday. They often work more during the harvest. When asked when they get a break, one member of the cooperative laughed and said, "we take breaks when it rains." Martínez prefers working at the UBPC because members receive a higher income when they exceed their quota to the state. He also likes taking part in the decisions about what crops to grow.

Seventy-one-year-old Umberto Nicolás Pérez González, a former sugar mill worker who spoke as he harvested potatoes, told *Militant* reporters that he liked the fact that work on the UBPC was based on "greater cooperation."

The average age of the 113 members of the Sierra Maestra is about 35. Ninety-seven are directly involved in production, including truck drivers, mechanics, and others who work for the entire area. The remaining 16 includes cooks, a janitor, a nurse, and elected individuals with administrative responsibilities. Twenty-three members of the cooperative are women. Thirteen are members Union of Young Communists; 23 are members of the Communist Party; and all belong to the National Union of Agricultural and Forestry Workers.

Individuals are taken into membership in the cooperative by majority vote of the members after they have spent at least one month, but more often three, working on the farm. For this initial period of time, they are not members of the UBPC, and do not share in its proceeds, but rather work on a contract.

Students from a nearby high-school-level boarding school come to work in the fields three hours a day. Half the students work in the morning, half in the afternoon. This sort of program, combining study and work, is a cornerstone of the Cuban educational system. The Sierra Maestra provides most of the food for the meals at the school.

Linking workers to the land

Acosta explained how the organization of production to link workers to the land is applied concretely at the Sierra Maestra cooperative. "We have divided the UBPC into three areas," he explained, each of which includes roughly equal portions of the various grades of soil that exist in the region.

Groups of 25-30 workers have responsibility for each area, and within each area, individual workers take responsibility for specific plots of land; what they earn is based on their individual production results. Efforts are pooled for major harvests, such as the potato crop. Members receive a share of the profit derived from selling what has been produced in their area. Half the proceeds from sale of the surplus is distributed among members of the UBPC and half goes to a general fund for the cooperative as a whole to pay back loans, make investments, and cover other needs. On a monthly basis, each worker is given an advance on expected income that ranges from 8.40 to 10.75 pesos a day.

A 'disastrous' first year

The Sierra Maestra cooperative has 16 caballerías under cultivation. Its crops include potatoes, black beans, garlic, boniato (a kind of sweet potato), yucca, tomatoes, and corn. In addition, the farm has 130 sheep, 150 chickens, 50 pigs, and a lagoon for the cultivation of fish.

Like many UBPCs, the Sierra Maestra had a rough first year, one that Acosta described as "disastrous." That year it ran a deficit of 112,000 pesos, and two-thirds of the membership left — of the 98 original members, only 34 remained. A new leadership was elected the following year and workers began taking a more active role in

Goals for the UBPCs

Acosta discussed five goals adopted by the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, the national trade union federation in Cuba, that guide the work of the Sierra Maestra cooperative. Three have been accomplished. They are labor force stability; increasing the use of draft animals and maintaining their conditions so that work can proceed when circumstances do not allow for the use of tractors; and "linking workers to the work site" (*la vinculación del hombre al área*) — i.e., organizing production and pay to assure workers take the greatest possible responsibility for the land they till.

Acosta explained that in the first years there had been a great deal of fluctuation in the size and composition of the membership of the cooperative, and this had made it harder to organize production efficiently. Stabilizing the workforce was a challenge, he stressed; "not everyone can handle this

One of the main criticisms of the UBPCs is the fact that "90% of the members' income comes from advance payments they



Militant photos: Joshua Carroll
Augustin Acosta, president of Sierra Maestra UBPC, with mare that was recovered by "rapid response brigade" of cooperative members after it was stolen last year. Left, workers harvest the potato crop. Sierra Maestra is one of few UBPCs to meet efficiency goals and turn a profit, an important part of turning around economic crisis.

actually broken even or achieved profitability. At the Fourth National Conference of Basic Units of Cooperative Production held last fall in the eastern province of Santiago, representatives from non-sugar-producing UBPCs discussed ways for improving the organizational and productive methods of the cooperatives in general. Cuban vice president Carlos Lage explained to the meeting that "even though 71 percent of [UBPCs] are showing losses, the constant reduction of those losses and improved results in production are favorable aspects in the course of Cuban agriculture." He further explained that while the population's needs were not yet being met by the UBPCs, "the advances made have allowed us to reduce the level of food imported before the Special Period by 65 percent, and to confirm that the essential way of resolving the population's food needs is through production rather than increased imports." In 1996 Cuba produced a record 1.7 million tons of root vegetables. This, however, fell short of satisfying total demand that is estimated by the Cuban government to be 3.5 million tons.

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One of the main criticisms of the UBPCs is the fact that "90% of the members' income comes from advance payments they

receive and only 10% comes from the profits recorded at the end of the fiscal year," reported *Granma International* in a December 28 article last year. Workers receive these advances whether or not their cooperative ever actually meets its contractual obligations. And the majority do not.

Maria Caridad, who is 29 and was a founding member of the Sierra Maestra, was a worker on the state farm before 1993. She remembered the first years of trying to organize the cooperative. She agreed that "they were a disaster." Caridad credits the turnaround to the fact that the members of the cooperative replaced the old leadership by electing a new one that, among other things, has been able to lead the implementation of the goal of linking workers to the work site. She said, "It's better to work here now. The more work you do, the more you make." She added, "the longer you are here, the more you learn." Progress on this front is one of the many accomplishments that distinguishes the Sierra Maestra as a vanguard UBPC.

This year, the UBPC intends to allocate the best of its crop for export. With the much needed dollars this will bring in, they will buy extra work clothes, shoes, spare parts for equipment, and other things that cannot be purchased for pesos. Additionally, as part of encouraging production, the Cuba Fruta state plant, to which the Sierra Maestra sells a big portion of its potato harvest, places 25 percent of the payments it makes to the UBPC in an account from which the cooperative can make withdrawals in dollars.

Tomas Pineda, a member of the co-op since 1994, discussed some of the advances they have made in organization. He pointed to one particular example of the creative ingenuity that the workers use to increase efficiency. *El burrito* (the little donkey) is a welded steel frame with hooks on the top that holds open a potato sack for a worker to fill. Using *el burrito* makes it unnecessary for another worker to hold the sack and thereby makes it possible for more workers to gather potatoes from the ground.

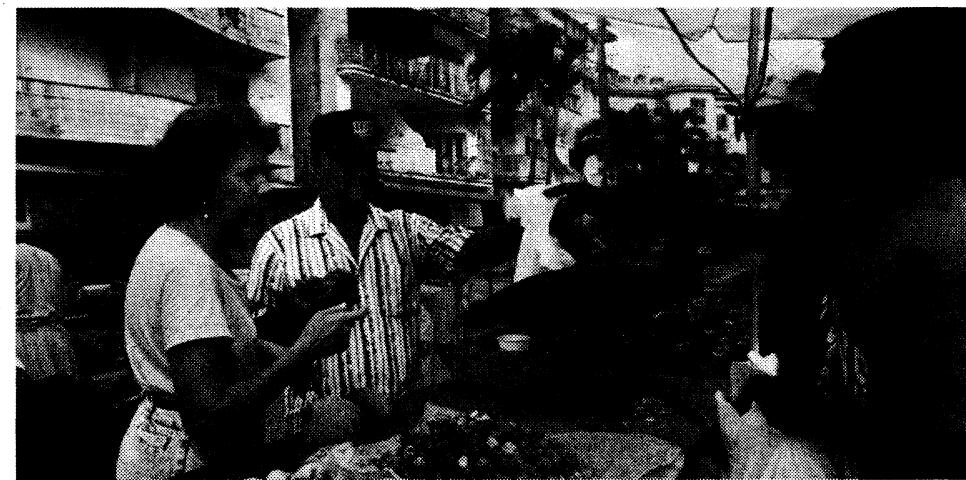
Discipline and decision-making

Absenteeism at the Sierra Maestra is almost nonexistent. This has mostly to do with the morale and confidence of the workers, and the fact that it is they themselves who have consciously organized to increase their discipline in order to increase production, Acosta explained. The internal rules of the cooperative — decided on by the workers — stipulate that for one unexcused absence, a worker loses a month's share in the income of the UBPC beyond the advance he has already received; for the second one, he loses two months'; for the third unexcused absence, he is expelled from the cooperative.

All decisions on what crops to plant are made by the membership of the cooperative. Before the planting season begins, the UBPC leadership, in consultation with state agencies, draws up a plan. This is discussed and modified by the workers in each area. Final proposals are decided on by a general assembly of the members of the cooperative.

The Sierra Maestra, at the request of the state, had been allotting five caballerías to growing potatoes. Last year, however, the members thought that given the cooperative's size, this volume was too large. They noted that the potato harvest requires particularly labor-intensive work, and this work must be done in a relatively short period of time. They proposed that they grow only two caballerías of potatoes. This was agreed to.

The members of the cooperative meet once a month in a general assembly to make decisions about production schedules, organization, and other important business matters. They used to meet every three months, but recently decided that it was necessary to meet more often. Additionally, Saturdays at 6:30 a.m. all the members meet to make those pressing decisions that cannot wait until the monthly meeting. "These are practical meetings, however," said Acosta, explaining that they last only 20–25 minutes,



Militant/Argiris Malapanis
Food-producing UBPCs can sell their excess produce at agricultural markets for unregulated prices like the one above in Havana, April 1997. Right, Maria Caridad, a founding member of the Sierra Maestra UBPC. "The longer you are here, the more you learn," she said. In background, workers use "burritos," a simple device created by workers to increase efficiency, to hold open potato sacks.



Militant/Joshua Carroll

"where everyone gets access to information, and where we vote on what needs to be voted on — then we get to work!"

There are two goals the Sierra Maestra cooperative has not yet met: achieving food self-sufficiency in animal protein; and the construction of adequate housing to fulfill the needs of cooperative members.

Acosta pointed out that while the cooperative produces enough food to supply its own dining room (workers get their main meal and two substantial snacks each day), they have not yet been able to produce enough food to supply all the needs of each family, especially with animal protein. Workers at the cooperative, however, do eat meat two to three times a week — much more than most Cubans. Only 25 percent of the food-producing UBPCs have achieved self-sufficiency even in food production such as root and garden vegetables, to say nothing of meat.

Housing: a leadership question

Neither has the cooperative yet been able to build the housing needed by its members, a number of whom live in dormitory-style housing on site. Building individual, private housing for these members and their families is a priority. "We need to construct 13 more homes for the members of the cooperative," explained Héctor del Cueto Rico, the UBPC's economist. When asked if the insufficient housing was due to the scarcity of resources, del Cueto Rico answered, "Sure, our resources are limited. But," he

stressed, "finishing the construction of homes is a leadership question — with leadership you can overcome the problem of limited resources." Del Cueto Rico pointed out that they have just completed seven new homes on the property of the cooperative. Five more will be built this year; and the remaining eight, the year after that. Building adequate housing for UBPC members is one of the goals on which the least progress has been made in Cuba overall. In fact, in *Granma International*'s October 5 report on the national meeting of the UBPCs, it notes that over the past four years only 18 percent of the total housing needed by the UBPCs has actually been built, "in spite of this activity having the highest priority."

Security

Acosta explained that the co-op has had to deal with the problem of theft — not by members, he stressed, but from the outside.

To confront this they organize their own security. Each night two teams of "worker guards" take shifts patrolling — every member participates. Those who live on the grounds make rounds twice each night as well. In addition, they have developed a "rapid response brigade." Acosta told a story about a time this brigade was called into action. Last year, the co-op's only horse was stolen in the middle of the night. They sounded the alarm, and within minutes members of the co-op came out, many in their underwear, he noted. They searched until five or six in the morning but were unable

to find the mare. So they organized a smaller detachment, who "became bloodhounds" and "did some detective work." Ultimately, the mare was found in a cornfield not far from the farm. They never found the thieves.

Acosta explained the policy of the co-op when they do catch thieves. First, the thief is relieved of all the possessions he is carrying — tools, bicycle, knife, whatever. These become the property of the Sierra Maestra. Then a fine is discussed and decided on by the leadership of the cooperative. If the thief agrees to pay, he is let go. Half the fine goes to the workers who caught the thief, and the other half goes to the cooperative as a whole. If he refuses to accept these terms, he is turned over to the local police. These are a part of the internal bylaws of the Sierra Maestra, Acosta explained. "This is not the law in Cuba," he noted, "but it is what we do here."

Acosta told another story about someone who had been caught stealing. Not long ago, a young man had been caught with some yucca he had taken from the cooperative. It was obvious to Acosta that he was hungry and that his family needed the vegetable. "So we decided to let him keep it," Acosta explained, "but we told him that he should never steal from us again. We told him that the next time he needed food, we would sell it to him for what he could afford, or we would give it to him, but that he must ask us."

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Workers at the Sierra Maestra are deeply conscious of the fact that the progress they have registered mirrors modest steps forward in the Cuban economy as a whole. More — and a wider variety — of food is available. Transportation has improved. Electrical blackouts are less frequent. Books, magazines, and newspapers, while still not produced in the numbers needed, are more widely available.

Overall Cuba's economy grew 2 percent in 1997, less than had been hoped for but considered an achievement in the face of the tightening of the U.S. embargo, more than \$800 million in damage from Hurricane Lily, and a poor sugar harvest. Economic growth of 4–6 percent is projected for 1998 and 1999.

The discipline, morale, and collective effort displayed by workers at the Sierra Maestra show how working people in Cuba have consciously fought to confront the economic crisis through which they have been living, and how — in the process — they have advanced their revolution.

Mary-Alice Waters and Francisco Picado contributed to this article.

Over 30,000 students demonstrate in Egypt against U.S. war moves on Iraq

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS AND JACK WILLEY

CAIRO, Egypt — "We can't let the U.S. government destroy Iraq. That would be like letting them cut off one of our arms," said Hossm El-din Mustaffa, a student at Cairo University here. "The Iraqi people are an inseparable part of the Arab peoples." Mustaffa took part in student demonstrations of nearly 25,000 people at that campus two weeks ago against Washington's massive military buildup in the Arab-Persian Gulf and preparations to assault Iraq.

He is also part of the committee organizing the meeting of the General Council of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), which opens here March 5. The two-day gathering will be followed by an international meeting to evaluate the World Festival of Youth and Students that took place in Cuba last summer and to discuss the next steps in building an anti-imperialist youth movement. WFDY was one of the organizations that sponsored the festival.

Organizing opposition to U.S.

imperialism's designs on the Middle East and to the expansion of NATO in Eastern and Central Europe will be part of the discussion at these gatherings.

Mustaffa and Sameh El Shall, a journalist and member of the Progressive Youth Union of Egypt, which is hosting the events, said that large student actions opposing Washington's aggression against the Iraqi people took place in all the major universities in Cairo and other Egyptian cities in February. The largest mobilization occurred at Ain Chames (Eye of the Sun) University, with more than 30,000 students protesting three or four days in a row the third week of February. Taxi drivers and other people interviewed gave similar figures.

About 10,000 students demonstrated at El Azhar and Zaka Zhik universities, El Shall said. Smaller actions of 2,000–3,000 took place on campuses in Alexandria and elsewhere. In Cairo the police prevented the students from taking their mobilizations into the streets. All those interviewed said the government forced the protesters to stay

within the confines of the campuses.

Participants at the WFDY-sponsored gatherings will also discuss actions in solidarity with the socialist revolution in Cuba and support for national liberation struggles — from Palestine to Ireland and Quebec.

As of March 4, nearly 40 people from over 20 countries had arrived in Cairo to take part in the meetings. They include representatives of the General Union of Palestinian Students, Socialist Youth Union of Bulgaria, Union of Young Communists of Cuba, Movement of Young Communists of France, Communist Youth of Greece, Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, Democratic Youth League and Socialist Youth League of Japan, SWAPO youth of Namibia, the youth group of the Communist Party of Russia, and Young Socialists from Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Other youth organizations represented hail from Brazil, Denmark, Cyprus, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Nepal, and Sudan.

Socialists meet to discuss political work in the unions

Campaigning against imperialism and war

BY PEGGY KREINER

MINNEAPOLIS — Socialist workers who are members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) met here February 21–22 to discuss their experiences campaigning against imperialism and war among their co-workers, and to assess the new signs of workers' resistance to the bosses' austerity demands.

Following a political report by Gaetan Whiston, a leader of the Young Socialists and a steelworker in Minneapolis, several participants in the meeting recounted discussions they had with co-workers on the war drive against Iraq. "I've found it helpful to frame my discussions in terms of who declares war, who has the weapons, who benefits from these wars, and who pays the price," said Janice Ortega from Cleveland. She mentioned one worker in particular who drew a connection between the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989 and the current war drive, and who then read *By Any Means Necessary* by Malcolm X.

"We should use these discussions to point to the Cuban revolution as the alternative to the imperialist system and its wars," said Rollande Girard from Miami. Others pointed to the Pathfinder title *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*, with speeches by Cuban leaders Fidel Castro and Ricardo Alarcón denouncing the 1990–91 U.S.-led war against Iraq, as a useful tool. Upcoming conferences celebrating "100 years of anti-imperialist struggle" in the Twin Cities and elsewhere were also noted as examples of important political events to build on the job.

Many participants spoke of a growing polarization of opinions regarding the U.S. war moves against Iraq, both on the job and in society as a whole. As part of this polarization, growing numbers of workers and youth are attracted to the working-class movement. One participant pointed to the fact that five people had joined the Young Socialists in the previous couple of weeks.

The main political report also addressed the role of the USWA and AFL-CIO officialdoms in promoting reactionary American nationalist campaigns — such as campaigning against the North American Free Trade Agreement and the International Monetary Fund — which line up workers behind their bosses and government in their drive toward war. "America first" demagogic is also being more aggressively promoted by ultra-rightists such as Patrick Buchanan.

"Socialists need to counteract this class-collaborationist line," said Brian Williams, a steelworker in Baltimore. Williams pointed to how this approach intensifies competition among workers, noting that at his plant union officials refers to the "right-to-work" state of Virginia as "little Mexico."

Whiston also pointed to several recent steelworkers' strikes as a reflection of the growing willingness of workers to fight and as a part of the bottoming out of the retreat of the working class internationally. He underlined the need for a timely response to strikes like those by USWA members at

Georgetown Steel in South Carolina, the Uniroyal Goodrich plant in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and CF&I in Pueblo, Colorado. In addition, some 100 workers at Magnetic Specialties Incorporated (MSI), remain on strike in Marietta, Ohio. A March 15 union solidarity rally will take place in Marietta to mark the one-year anniversary of this fight. Whiston stressed the importance of extending solidarity to these strike battles in a timely way by talking to co-workers and attending picket lines with them, and working with others in promoting solidarity with these strikes through our union locals.

Mike Fitzsimmons from Cleveland said that at an October rally for steelworkers on strike against MSI, "Strikers talked about how the 10-month-long Wheeling-Pittsburgh strike had a big impact on them. We need to get back there with the *Militant*." At a ratification vote that ended the Uniroyal strike in late December, socialist unionists also got an excellent response, selling 27 copies of the *Militant*.

In order to appreciate the working-class resistance today, Whiston pointed out, "Don't start with the assumption that the employers have the upper hand in a given battle, but with the fact that workers want to fight and will organize to do so."

Participants in the meeting decided to donate "profit-sharing" checks, which they will receive from employers this spring in lieu of wage increases, to the capital fund that will soon be launched to help buy the equipment needed to revolutionize the production of Pathfinder books (see article on page 4). The meeting also voted to increase the monthly goal of selling Pathfinder titles to fellow steelworkers from 40 to 63.

Peggy Kreiner is a member of USWA Local 1211 in Pittsburgh.

❖

BY EDWIN FRUIT

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "Our goal is to extend and deepen our orientation to the working class, the only class that can take power out of the hands of the imperialists," said Ernie Mailhot, a ship yard worker from Miami, in the opening report to a meeting of socialist workers who are members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), held here February 21–22.

Mailhot explained how the goals of U.S. imperialism included exercising military, political, and economic hegemony around the world and to put pressure on the Russian workers state, which the U.S. rulers hope ultimately to bring into the capitalist orbit. Mailhot noted that compared to the last several years, workers today "are more likely to resist the demands for concessions as we saw in the United Parcel strike and other fights." This is true worldwide, he added, pointing to workers' demonstrations in France, Germany, and Canada, as well as protests in Indonesia against the government's austerity drive and the dictates of the imperialist banks. "This is also reflected in the IAM," Mailhot said. "Last fall, rank and file Machinists who work for Trans World Airlines in St. Louis staged a several-hour work stoppage to protest lack of progress in negotiations with the company. And just this past week, 900 sugar workers who are members of the IAM in Florida went on strike for higher wages and better working conditions."

Scott Breen, an aerospace worker at Boeing in Seattle, gave a report on the two fold attack by both Boeing and city government against workers there. "Both its increasing competition with European rival Airbus and its role as a military contractor forces Boeing to clamp down on workers," he said. "This includes speedup, forced overtime, and an attack



Militant/Rich Stuart

Socialist steelworkers meet in Minneapolis February 21–22.

on the rights of workers to speak their mind." Breen explained how Boeing has tried to implement a "gag" order so that no employee can speak to any media on job related events. He also reported on the ongoing fight of his 1997 Seattle mayoral campaign for an exemption from disclosing the names of its financial contributors. "As a result of our fight for democratic rights, the city has been forced to substantially reduce imposed fines and we will continue to press forward until we get the exemption that is granted nationally and in other local areas."

The socialists recessed their meeting and marched to the White House to join 2,000 people protesting the U.S. government's plans for war against Iraq. There they joined other supporters of the *Militant* to get out the socialist press. Socialist Machinists alone sold 67 copies in about an hour.

Upon returning to the meeting, the socialist workers from around the country discussed the political work they are carrying out on the job and in the union. A recurrent theme was that what socialist workers say and do before the war is important in how co-workers view them. Olga Rodríguez, an airline worker from New York, said, "We have to explain to workers that what the U.S. government wants to do to Iraq is what the bosses and their government will do to us as we resist." Several meeting participants explained that when workers are in struggle, from strikes to anti-police brutality actions, "we have to go to these actions and take the war question with us."

At a Militant Labor Forum at the Pathfinder Bookstore, Ma'mud Shirvani gave a presentation entitled, "U.S. Hands off Iraq: The weakening of the Clinton administration and the shortening war fuse."

Shirvani spoke of Malcolm X and his principled stance against U.S. imperialism. "In preparing for war," Shirvani said, "the rulers try to make workers identify with 'our' country. Malcolm X was very clear on this. 'I'm not an American. I'm a victim of Americanism,' Malcolm said. He saw the people of the world, not just as victims but as fighters from those in Vietnam to freedom fighters in the Congo, battling the imperialists in the 1960s."

Shirvani explained how the U.S. aggression against Iraq was part of a bigger war drive aimed at the Russian workers state. Attempting to get control of the oil in the Caspian Sea region and the expansion of NATO up to Russia's borders are part of that. "As capitalism acts its vulture role, it creates its own grave diggers," Shirvani added. Washington faces problems in the Mideast, from their inability to crush the 1979 Iranian revolution to the continuing struggle of the Palestinians. "Just as the horrors of World War I created a situation where the Russian revolution triumphed, so future struggles of working people will occur."

A lively discussion ensued, which included a number of young people who had attended the demonstration earlier in the day.

One of the themes that came out of the discussion was that any support for "diplomacy" or putting stress on the sanctions at a time when Washington was on the brink of bombing Baghdad meant bending to a pro-war position. "We have to be clear what our demands are," Shirvani said. "Stop the imperialist slaughter! U.S. Hands off Iraq! Get all U.S., British, and other invading troops out of the Middle East now!"

At a continuation of the Machinists meeting on Sunday, Mary Martin, an airline worker from Washington, D.C. presented a tasks report that included a discussion of goals for selling the *Militant* and other socialist literature on the job.

Edwin Fruit is a member of IAM Local 1976 in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

BY WENDY LYONS

BOSTON — Members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) from New York and Atlanta talked about growing interest in the Cuban revolution among co-workers during a meeting of socialists in that union here February 7–8.

In Atlanta, seven workers in one factory raised money for the *Militant's* Books for Cuba fund, which covers buying Pathfinder books to be donated to libraries, universities, and factories in Cuba. Arlene Rubinstein explained they decided to donate *The Second Declaration of Havana* to show that workers in the U.S. read Cuban revolutionary writings, as well as *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X speaks) to let Cubans know about the ideas of a revolutionary from the United States. These books were delivered to a factory library by Pathfinder supporters following the February Havana book fair.

Paul Cornish from Atlanta, who helped organize this effort, described how he first came in contact with the Young Socialists through buying *The Wages System* by Frederick Engels and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* in the factory where he works. He later decided to join.

"There are no special preparations for war," said Gale Shangold from Los Angeles in the political report to the meeting. She pointed to the example of the Bolsheviks, who concentrated on propaganda work among individual workers in their factories, and insisted on giving revolutionary answers to every question. "When the war came the Bolsheviks were calm. It is developing habits of doing politics with workers — like the original worker-Bolsheviks — systematic weekly propaganda work on the job along with selling socialist literature at plant gates, and in the Black community and other working class neighborhoods, that prepares communists when the imperialists go to war."

Without a weekly rhythm of work rooted in the working class, Shangold pointed out, communists can adapt to the petty-bourgeois left and trade union bureaucrats. She cited the example of socialist workers adapting to the UNITE officialdom's campaign against sweatshops. The meeting voted to oppose this campaign as leading workers into the trap of economic nationalism. The "anti-sweatshop" effort focuses on getting media publicity to put pressure on garment bosses who hire workers in other countries by exposing the conditions of workers in those factories. Like earlier, "Made in the USA" protectionist campaigns of the UNITE officials, the idea is to pressure garment bosses into hiring only workers in the United States. By promoting the idea that "our" bosses should stay in "our" country so we can have jobs, it softens workers up to get behind wars for the interest of "our" country, Shangold said. Ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan, who is seeking to carve out a fascist cadre, is applauding union officials for their protectionist campaigns.

As part of strengthening their organization garment and textile workers voted to raise the weekly sustainer they give to Socialist Workers Party branches many of them are members of.

Wendy Lyons is a member of UNITE Local 63 in New York.

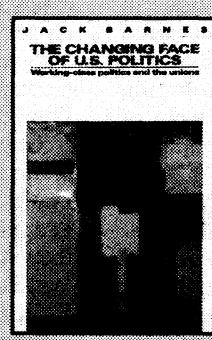
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Freed Puerto Rico independence fighter defies U.S. government parole restrictions

BY RON RICHARDS

CALES, Puerto Rico — About 150 people attended a rally here March 3 to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the birth of independence and socialist leader Juan Antonio Corretjer. The main invited speaker was Antonio Camacho, who was recently released after 10 years in a U.S. prison. Camacho had been convicted of transporting money stolen from the Wells Fargo company in Hartford, Connecticut. The Popular Puerto Rican Army - Macheteros took credit for the robbery.

A week earlier, on February 23, U.S. Marshal Herman Wirshing announced that an arrest warrant had been issued for Camacho. One of 15 supporters of independence for this U.S. colony who was in prison in the United States, Camacho was released from federal prison in Pennsylvania February 13. The arrest warrant charges that he has violated the conditions of his release.

At a February 20 news conference at the Ateneo Puertorriqueño, Camacho announced that he would not comply with the restrictions that were part of his release. The restrictions call for him to report to the federal building in San Juan every 72 hours and forbid him to associate with other convicted felons. He violated the last clause when he was met at the airport by Lolita Lebrón and Rafael Cancel Miranda, both of whom spent more than 25 years in federal prison after they fired shots in the U.S. Congress in 1954 to protest the colonial exploitation of the island. Camacho has stated that he has no plans to live clandestinely, but he will not comply with the restrictions.

The Ateneo Puertorriqueño is a frequent venue for activities of the independence movement. Fifteen minutes after Camacho finished his news conference, U.S. marshals raided the building to arrest him, but he had already left.

In the two weeks since his release from prison, Camacho has spoken at the Río Piedras and Mayagüez campuses of the University of Puerto Rico at the invitation of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI). Instead of speaking in person at the rally in Ciales, Camacho avoided arrest by addressing the gathering via video tape.

The rally began with about 20 Puerto Rican police with bulletproof vests watching from the streets near the public plaza. The event was dedicated to the residents of Vieques, who have been fighting for decades to close the U.S. military bases on their is-



Militant photos: left, Selva Nebbia; right, Ron Richards
Upon his return to Puerto Rico February 15, Antonio Camacho (left) was welcomed by huge crowds, including activists in Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI), right. FUPI has since organized campus meetings for Camacho.

land. Cancel Miranda was one of the speakers at the rally. Two of the 14 independence fighters still imprisoned in the United States, Edwin Cortés and Adolfo Matos, sent messages to the rally. In his greetings, Cortés opposed the militarization of Puerto Rico, including the transfer of part of the U.S. Southern Command from Panama to this

country and the construction of a giant over-the-horizon radar, as well as rocket launches carried out by the U.S. government.

The banners on the stage read, "Yankee Navy out of Vieques," "Commander Corretjer is present," and "Freedom for the political prisoners and prisoners of war." A protest against the U.S. military was an-

nounced for March 8 in Vieques. A rally against the proposed sale of the government-owned telephone company is scheduled for March 8 in San Juan. It was also announced that there are vigils every night at the site of the rocket launches. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration claims the rockets are needed to study turbulence in the atmosphere.

"Imperialism needs to destroy the will of the people of Puerto Rico," Camacho declared in his taped speech. "Statehood represents a declaration of civil war." The U.S. Congress is currently discussing a bill that would authorize a vote on the future of Puerto Rico. Governor Pedro Rosselló of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party won the last election here with 50.1 percent of the vote.

"The liberty of our people is not negotiable," said Camacho.

After Camacho's speech, the all-women rock band Grupo Alarma performed. The high point of the music was a rock version of *The International*, the anthem of the workers movement worldwide. During the song people were dancing and raising their fists in the air.

The March 4 issue of the *San Juan Star* reported on a campaign by a group of pro-independence attorneys to demand that the U.S. government drop the arrest warrant against Camacho and negotiate less onerous conditions for his freedom. Head U.S. Marshal Wirshing replied, "We cannot negotiate that which is beyond our power." He said the job of the marshals is simply to carry out the warrant issued by the U.S. Parole Commission.

Public workers walk out in Germany to press fight against social cuts

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Subways, trolleys, and busses stood still in cities across Germany the morning of March 3, as members of the public transport workers union ÖTV carried out a half-day warning strike. Millions of people caught in traffic jams for hours were reminded that the negotiations between the ÖTV and DAG public workers unions, with 3.2 million members, and the German federal and local governments are close to stalled. According to the unions, 130,000 workers across the country took part in warning strikes.

Negotiations began in early January over the public workers' contracts, with union demands for an overall 4.5 percent raise in compensation, including wage increases at least equal to inflation; more even wages and hours between east and west; and job guarantees. The local and federal governments, led by minister of Interior Manfred Kanther, have demanded a reduction in sick-leave payments and cuts in pension benefits.

Some 45,000 workers turned out for protests during an earlier round of warning strikes in the first half of February.

A second round of work stoppages took place during the week that culminated March 3. On February 26, for example, garbage collectors in the northern town of Braunschweig caused traffic jams by dumping rubbish in the town center. Union officials said 3,000 workers marched in protest outside the town hall there. That day in Wolfsburg, public transport workers took part in token stoppages during the early part of the morning rush hour. Hospital and university employees in the town of Potsdam near Berlin walked out to join other public sector workers for rallies that drew around 1,000 people.

The states of Baden-Württemberg, Nordrhein-Westfalen, and Hessen were center of warning strikes March 2. In Baden-Württemberg 8,000 workers took part in the protests and, according to union officials, 600 buses and 200 trolleys in eight towns stood still for four hours that morning. Buses and trains in Munich, Lübeck, and Wiesbaden also stood still; in Berlin 4,000 public employees rallied. In Frankfurt am Main garbage collectors stopped working and a demonstration of 2,000 took place in

that town. In Duisburg 4,000 public employees rallied.

Demands for a shorter workweek to reduce unemployment have been raised by the unions as part of these negotiations. ÖTV chairman Herbert Mai stated in a February 16 interview in *Bild Zeitung*, "In a longer view we need a massive shortening of the workweek. With a 30-hour workweek a decisive step toward the goal of reducing unemployment by half would be reached." He said budget cuts between 1992 and 1996 eliminated 500,000 jobs in the public sector. Working hours per week are 38.5 in the

west and 40 in the east. Unemployment climbed to 4.8 million in January — over 12 percent.

The latest strikes came immediately after the March 1 election for premier in the state of Lower Saxony, which the Social Democratic candidate Gerhard Schröder won by a wide margin. The vote was viewed as a sort of primary to the September federal elections, in which Schröder will challenge conservative chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metalworkers union in Söderläne, Sweden.

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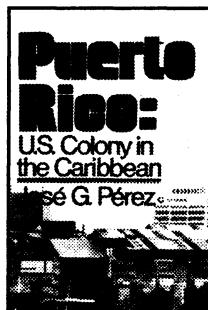
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CORRECTION

The article in last week's *Militant* "Peace deal" sets hair trigger for war" referred to rightist Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovsky with an incorrect first name.

50,000 workers in Kosovo demand rights

Continued from front page

several buildings and sprayed their town with gunfire. Serb cops then blocked off Drenica, the region where the villages were attacked and where the UCK has set up guerrilla bases. Explosions could be heard in the hills March 1, according to a London *Financial Times* article.

The Balkan powder keg in Kosovo has ignited over Belgrade's attempts to stifle demands for independence expressed by many ethnic Albanians there. Kosovo was granted autonomy in 1974 following protests demanding a republic. In 1990 the Serbian government dissolved Kosovo's parliament after stripping the province of its autonomy the year before. Albanians overwhelmingly backed a referendum on independence in 1991. Belgrade responded by shutting down schools teaching in the Albanian language — from elementary schools to Pristina's university — that same year.

Pro-independence forces growing

In 1992 Ibrahim Rugova was elected president of the Republic of Kosovo. Rugova and his Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) declared Kosovo an independent republic and set up a parallel government to the Serbian regime, with a system of separate taxation, health care, and education.

The recent upsurge has spurred divisions within the LDK. Hydajet Hyseni, an LDK vice president, said it was time to abandon Rugova's nonconfrontational approach and adopt a more active policy that would bring more people into the streets. "We cannot be satisfied with our results or the attitude of the international community," Hyseni declared. "The militant tendency among Albanians is the consequence of unproductive policies in Kosovo." He said the attacks by the UCK were justifiable against a brutal occupying army.

The UCK was founded in 1992 with the aim of fighting for independence and to establish a closer relationship with Albania. Some of its leaders fought in the 1992-95 war in Bosnia against the chauvinist Serb forces. They launched their first armed attack in 1993, but only began to organize regular and sustained actions in 1997. The group's operations have included assassinations of Serb officials.

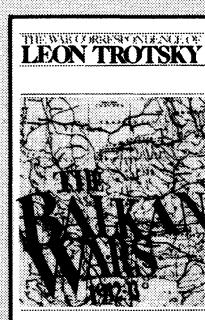
Support for the rebel force has steadily grown, including among local leaders of the Democratic League of Kosovo. Many Albanians refer to the hills and areas surrounding Lausa — 50 miles from the capital Pristina — as "liberated areas."

On November 25 UCK fighters fired rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons on Serbian police who came to collect taxes from peasants in the village of Vojnik. The next day the cops returned, firing at random into farmhouses, a shop, a mosque, and a school where an Albanian teacher, Halit Geci, was killed.

Three days later 20,000 people attended Geci's funeral. During the assembly three UCK members wearing army fatigues and carrying submachine guns jumped onto the platform to address the crowd. They called for armed struggle against the Serb repression, and received a thunderous ovation and chants of "UCK! UCK!"

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"Sufferings are not strange to us," remarked one of Geci's relatives. "But finally there are young men who think differently. I don't know who they are or what they do, but it is clear that the oppression is no longer bearable."

One month after the mass funeral some 10,000 Albanians marched in Pristina December 25 — the second day of protests — demanding the right to study in Albanian-language universities that had been closed down by Belgrade. That same day assailants launched two attacks on Serb police, exploding hand grenades near a police station and firing shots at the cops.

One week before these protests, a court composed of four Serb judges and one Albanian sentenced 15 Albanians to prison terms of 4 to 20 years on charges of terrorism. During the nine-week trial the men were found guilty of belonging to the Kosovo Liberation Army. The defendants said confessions were extracted through torture.

"People want peace," said Alban Neziri, a 23-year-old student activist who was one of two men found innocent and released in those proceedings. "But when there is no other way to achieve liberation from our occupiers, then I would certainly take up arms for my state," he added.

Belgrade jittery over mass actions

The Stalinist regime in Serbia is nervous about the mounting political instability. Serbian defense minister Pavle Bulatovic told the Yugoslav parliament March 2 that there would be "no talks with terrorists in Kosovo."

The government was rocked earlier by a nine-week wave of daily mass demonstrations in the capital Belgrade that began in late 1996 and spread to 30 other cities. The protests forced the Serbian government to concede municipal elections to the opposition electoral coalition in 14 of the republic's 19 largest cities.



Some 50,000 people attended funeral of 14 fighters for Kosovo independence March 3

The protest actions in Kosovo were in part inspired by the armed rebellion a year ago in the neighboring Albanian workers state, against the U.S.-backed regime of former president Sali Berisha. Tens of thousands of working people and other rebels took control over several cities in the southern half of the country in early 1997.

Berisha's Democratic Party was soundly defeated in elections June 29 and July 6, conducted under the boot of an Italian-led military occupation force. Most of the Italian and other foreign troops that occupied Albania left the country by mid-August. Washington had organized its naval forces off the Adriatic coast of the Balkans in response to the revolt by the workers and peasants in Albania.

U.S. Balkan envoy Robert Gelbard, who

visited Pristina during the last week of February, denounced the Kosovo rebel group as a "terrorist organization."

Ending the UN "peacekeeping mission" in the neighboring republic of Macedonia on schedule in August "is a mistake," the *New York Times* warned in a March 2 editorial. The reason? "A violent group of ethnic Albanians, the Kosovo Liberation Army, has stepped up its terrorist attacks in Kosovo and claimed credit for two recent bombings in Macedonia."

The big-business daily hinted at military intervention in Serbia, calling for "new peacekeepers, possibly under the auspices of NATO" to replace the 1,000 imperialist troops scheduled to leave in August. "Events in Kosovo," the article asserted, "are a more direct danger."

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Who needs the counseling? — In Pensacola, Florida, a five-year-old was arrested on a felony charge for allegedly biting and scratching her teacher. A school official said



Harry
Ring

the arrest was intended to compel the child's parents to authorize counseling.

But nobody's in jail — A fed-

eral jury awarded \$450,000 to Amanda Buritica who was held for 22 hours by U.S. customs officials. She was strip-searched, X-rayed, and given a powerful laxative so that inspectors could check if she had swallowed drug packets. She was targeted because she was traveling alone on a "high risk" Singapore Airlines flight from Hong Kong, was wearing loose clothing and had no souvenirs.

'Hold the union' — According to the *Wall Street Journal*, it's rare for a McDonald's outlet to shut down. But one in Montreal is closing allegedly because it's losing money. The *Journal* says it's the

only store in the chain where the workers are unionized. The owners — who hold five other franchises — denied that McD ordered them to shut it down.

Racism — a deadly social disease — Heart disease is the top killer of U.S. women. Among women who are Black, the toll is 67 percent higher than among white women.

Security measure — In England, a pregnant woman waiting to appear in court on a minor theft charge was chained to a radiator for five hours. Another woman waiting to appear, was handcuffed to her and also chained to the radiator. The

company that operates the jail said the only secure cell was occupied by male prisoners.

...meanwhile — A British cop, who is an instructor in self-defense, was given a three-month jail term — half of it suspended — for assaulting a boy, age 10.

Be the first on the block — Diamond merchant Harry Winston teamed up with MIT Media Lab to bring you *Hearthrob*, a ruby and diamond brooch with chip-controlled light-emitting diodes that flash with each heartbeat. \$400,000.

Part of the heritage — "SACRAMENTO, California — Orga-

nizers of California's 150th birthday program failed to file tax returns, awarded contracts that weren't put out to bid, and took questionable trips to Scotland and Rhode Island, investigators charged." — News item.

Not worth the effort? — In a Florida damage suit General Motors was ordered to produce a document which bears out that it knew it was making some vehicles with fuel tanks that can explode in crashes. A GM memo calculated that the annual cost of deaths in such accidents came to about \$2.40 per vehicle, and it would cost about \$2.20 to prevent the fires.

How women helped lead 1917 revolt in Russia

To commemorate women's history month we print below excerpts from *The History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky. The excerpts are taken from the chapter "Five Days" in which Trotsky, a central leader of the first socialist revolution, describes how the celebration of International Women's Day in March 1917 sparked the revolution that overthrew the Russian monarchy. That event

BOOK OF THE WEEK

occurred in February, according to the Byzantine calendar, which was still in effect. Later that year the Bolsheviks led the workers and farmers to overthrow the capitalist government and replace the reactionary institutions.

BY LEON TROTSKY

The 23rd of February was International Woman's Day. The social-democratic circles had intended to mark this day in a general manner: by meetings, speeches, leaflets. It had not occurred to anyone that it might become the first day of the revolution.... On the following morning, however, in spite of all directives, the women textile workers in several factories went on strike, and sent delegates to the metal workers with an appeal for support.... Thus the fact is that the February revolution was begun from below, overcoming the resistance of its own revolutionary organizations, the initiative being taken of their own accord by the most oppressed and downtrodden part of the proletariat — the women textile workers, among them no doubt many soldiers' wives. The overgrown bread-lines had provided the last stimulus. About 90,000 workers, men and women, were on strike that day. The fighting mood expressed itself in demonstrations, meetings, encounters with the police....

A mass of women, not all of them workers, flocked to the municipal duma demanding bread. It was like demanding milk from a he-goat. Red banners appeared in different parts of the city, and inscriptions on them showed that the workers wanted bread, but neither autocracy nor war. Woman's Day

passed successfully, with enthusiasm and without victims. But what it concealed in itself, no one had guessed even by nightfall.

On the following day the movement not only fails to diminish, but doubles. About one-half of the industrial workers of Petrograd are on strike on the 24th of February. The workers come to the factories in the morning; instead of going to work they hold meetings; then begin processions toward the center. New districts and new groups of the population are drawn into the movement. The slogan "Bread!" is crowded out or obscured by louder slogans: "Down with autocracy!" "Down with the war!" Continuous demonstrations on the Nevsky — first compact masses of workmen singing revolutionary songs, later a motley crowd of city folk interspersed with the blue caps of students....

Throughout the entire day, crowds of people poured from one part of the city to another. They were persistently dispelled by the police, stopped and crowded back by cavalry detachments and occasionally by infantry. Along with shouts of "Down with the police!" was heard oftener and oftener a "Hurrah!" addressed to the Cossacks. That was significant. Toward the police the crowd showed ferocious hatred. They routed the mounted police with whistles, stones, and pieces of ice. In a totally different way the workers approached the soldiers. Around the barracks, sentinels, patrols and lines of soldiers, stood groups of working men and women exchanging friendly words with the army men. This was a new stage, due to the growth of the strike and the personal meeting of the worker with the army. Such a stage is inevitable in every revolution. But it always seems new, and does in fact occur differently every time: those who have read and written about it do not recognize the thing when they see it....

On the 25th, the strike spread wider. According to the government's figures, 240,000 workers participated that day. The most backward layers are following up the vanguard. Already a good number of small establishments are on strike. The street-cars are at a stand. Business concerns are closed. In the course of the day students of the higher schools join the strike. By noon tens of thousands of people pour to the Kazan cathedral and the surrounding streets. Attempts are made to organize street meetings; a series of armed encounters with the police occurs....

A great rôle is played by women workers in the relation between workers and soldiers. They go up to the cordons more boldly than men, take hold of the rifles, beseech, almost command: "Put down your bayonets — join us." The soldiers are excited, ashamed, exchange anxious glances, waver; someone makes up his mind first, and the bayonets rise guiltily above the shoulders of the advancing crowd. The barrier is opened, a joyous and grateful "Hurrah!" shakes the air. The soldiers are surrounded. Everywhere arguments, reproaches, appeals — the revolution makes another forward step....

Let us try to get a clearer idea of the inner logic of the movement. On February 23, under the flag of "Woman's Day," began the long-ripe and long-withheld uprising of the Petrograd working masses. The first step of the insurrection was the strike. In the course of three days it broadened and became practically general. This alone gave assurance to the masses and carried them forward. Becoming more and more aggressive, the strike merged with the demonstrations, which were



Winning over the majority of the Russian soldiers was essential to revolution's victory. Above, in March 1917 regiments mutinied and joined the revolutionists.

bringing the revolutionary mass face to face with the troops....

The entire active mass of the people had come out on the streets. It was settling accounts with the police successfully and easily. In the last two days the troops had been drawn into the events — on the second day, cavalry, on the third, the infantry too....

During the 27th of February the crowd liberated without bloodshed from the many jails of the capital, all political prisoners — among them the patriotic group of the Military and Industrial Committee, which had

been arrested on the 26th of January, and the members of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks, seized by Khabarov forty hours earlier. A political division occurred immediately outside the prison gates. The Menshevik-patriots set out for the Duma, where functions and places were to be assigned; the Bolsheviks marched to the districts, to the workers and soldiers, to finish with them the conquest of the capital. The enemy must have no time to breathe. A revolution, more than any other enterprise, has to be carried through to the end.

-25 AND 50 YEARS AGO-

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

March 16, 1973

MARCH 7 — British workers have set a day of national protest against the Conservative government's wage-freeze policies.

The general strike, which would be the first one in Britain since 1926, was called at an emergency meeting of the Trades Union Congress in London March 5.

That meeting took place as tens of thousands of British workers escalated anti-inflation strikes across the country.

It also coincides with the closing of world foreign exchange markets in a renewed crisis of the international monetary system. The British strikes and the turbulence of the world monetary system are intimately connected.

Prime Minister Edward Heath has imposed a wage-control program in England to strengthen the pound and bolster British competition in world finance. As in the United States, wages are controlled but food prices are spiraling.

In the past two weeks the anger of British workers has exploded in massive protests. A London correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote that "Britain faces perhaps its gravest industrial crisis in 47 years."

The strikers include:

Gas workers, who have stopped production at hundreds of factories.

Nearly 250,000 government workers.

Locomotive engineers struck the following day bringing the whole railroad system to a standstill.

London teachers are striking in three-day waves.

220,000 hospital workers have struck at well over 200 hospitals.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y.

FIVE (5) CENTS

March 15, 1948

America's most powerful corporations, their coffers bursting with profits and their prices hitting the stratosphere, are adopting an arrogant "get tough" policy toward CIO demands for third-round wage increases.

General Electric, [the] biggest corporation in the electrical goods industry, on March 3 opened negotiations with the CIO United Electrical Workers by formally announcing it would grant no wage boosts. GE which made \$1 profit for every \$3 of its net worth in 1947, said any wage increases would be "inflationary."

A similar hard-boiled stand is being taken by the meat-packing trust, whose prices have gone up several hundred percent since 1939. The "Big Four" of the meat industry — Armour, Swift, Wilson and Cudahy — have turned thumbs down on CIO Packinghouse Workers' demands, already reduced by union officials from an original request for a 29-cent an hour raise to 19 cents.

After two months of fruitless negotiations, some 100,000 CIO packinghouse workers are scheduled to go on strike throughout the country on March 16.

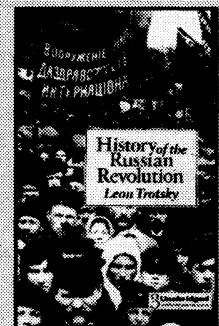
Now the steel moguls — falsely rumored as ready to raise wages on the basis of their monumental profits and a new price boost — have swung an ax on the wage aspirations of the CIO steel workers a month in advance of negotiations.

FROM PATHFINDER

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Leon Trotsky

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No to NATO, hands off Iraq!

"There are still questions about the future of Russia." That's one of the central reasons Madeleine Albright, with her typical bluntness, gave the U.S. Senate for maintaining the NATO military structure and bringing the regimes in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into it.

Faced with a deepening world economic crisis, Washington and its imperialist allies — who are also rivals — are driven to try to open up Russia and the other workers states in Europe and Asia for capitalist exploitation. But they are running up against the fact that they lost the Cold War. The noncapitalist social relations in the workers states proved stronger than the now-shattered Stalinist regimes there.

Despite decades of rule by a counterrevolutionary bureaucracy, the most fundamental conquests of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, where for the first time the working class succeeded in taking and holding state power, have not been overturned. That fact is a strength for working people around the world and a thorn in the side of the capitalist masters, whose system is in an historic decline.

One of the imperialists' aims in World War II had been to drown the conquests of the Russian revolution in blood. When this was prevented by the heroic resistance by the toilers of the Soviet Union, combined with the refusal of U.S. GIs to continue fighting in 1945, Washington and its allies were forced to retreat and attempt to weaken the underpinnings of the Soviet Union and the newly formed workers states in Eastern Europe through pressure on the Stalinist apparatuses that ruled there. That was the origin and aim of the "Cold War."

The 1990–91 U.S.-led slaughter in Iraq was the first war following the opening of a world capitalist depression in which the stakes involved not only a war by imperialism to impose its will on the people of a semicolonial country, but also the jockeying for position among rival imperialist powers. U.S. capital made gains against its competitors in the Mideast — U.S. companies snatched up most of the contracts to rebuild Kuwait following the war, for instance. But Washington failed in its central aim of establishing a stable, subservient regime in Baghdad. In fact, the Gulf War destabilized the region more, intensifying every conflict and setting the stage for future wars.

The U.S. rulers' next major effort to assert their domination was on the European continent — in Yugoslavia. There, after years of fanning the flames of war between rival gangs of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy and undermining every attempt by its rivals to intervene under the banner of the European Union or United Nations, Washington was able to force through an agreement on a NATO-led intervention, spearheaded by U.S. troops and named after Dayton, Ohio.

As the latest upsurge in the struggle for self-determination in Kosovo has shown, however, the ability of working people in Yugoslavia to fight has not been crushed, either by the Stalinist bureaucracy or by the imperialist intervention.

The Clinton administration has used the intervention in Yugoslavia to establish a European beachhead for U.S. imperialism and as a springboard to drive to expand the imperialist NATO alliance eastward to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The only possible target of a remilitarized Poland is the Russian workers state — a fact of which millions of workers in Russia, as well as officials in Moscow, are keenly aware.

This world picture shows why it would be wrong to reduce the issue in Iraq to one of oil. While every capitalist power desires to have more control over this essential natural resource — and the regions where it can be obtained — that's not the main question at stake. Washington's war drive in the Mideast today is aimed at using its military weight to bolster its advantage over its capitalist competitors, as well as to get in a stronger position to attempt to restore capitalist rule in the chunks of the world that have been wrested from the grip of the world market system.

"No Blood for Oil" became a common slogan in 1990–91. It captured in a popular way a real aspect of the Gulf War. At that point the capitalist rulers still had the illusion that the breakup of the old Russian empire rebuilt by Stalin and his heirs could produce in those regions a durable balance of forces advantageous to imperialism. And Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev and others in the Stalinist bureaucracy still had the illusion that collaboration with Washington's war drive would help them enter the world market system in stable way.

There are fewer such illusions now. The political stakes in Iraq are not just about the Mideast, but the enormous wealth in the workers states in the region surrounding the Caspian Sea and, most of all, Russia. That's why 36,000 U.S. troops with massive firepower at their disposal remain at the ready in the Arab-Persian gulf. That's why the U.S.-led provocations will continue over "inspections" that are an outrageous abuse of any nation's sovereignty.

Imperialism is not just mean policies against people in other countries. It is a system for maintaining the exploitation of the vast majority of humanity at home and abroad by a handful of extremely wealthy families. In the process, though, as *The Communist Manifesto* explained 150 years ago, capitalism creates its gravediggers — toilers in every country who have a common interest in ridding the world of this system.

Working people should celebrate and champion resistance by our side in every part of the world — Caterpillar workers rejecting the company's contract demands, public workers striking against cuts in social benefits in Germany, ethnic Albanians fighting for their national rights in Kosovo. The *Militant* urges its readers to join in these struggles, as well as in demanding all the "inspectors" and troops get out of the Mideast. In doing so, they should take every opportunity to explain imperialism and its aims, and work to build an international workers movement that can lead the toilers to power.

Washington keeps up provocations against Iraq

Continued from front page

including factories and hospitals — were imposed on Baghdad after the 1990–91 Gulf War, in which U.S.-led forces slaughtered some 150,000 Iraqi workers and peasants and crippled the country's infrastructure. Since then Washington has insisted on maintaining a tight economic embargo on Iraq, and U.S. warplanes enforce a ban on the Iraqi government flying planes over more than half of their country.

On March 1 a dispute over the so-called arms inspection pact reached on February 23 broke out between Iraqi ambassador Nizar Hamdoon and chairman of the United Nations Special Commission Richard Butler. The Iraqi official asserted during a television interview on CNN that the "weapons inspection teams" would be subordinate to diplomats chosen by Annan.

Butler responded that the accord "makes it perfectly clear that the absolute core of these inspections" would be based on individuals handpicked by him. A new special group is to be assigned to investigate eight "presidential sites" that had previously been off limits to Butler's team. Reports filed by this special group "will go from me, through the secretary general, to the Security Council," Butler declared in a separate interview on CNN. Baghdad has accused Butler of using too many U.S. and British personnel.

"The ability to turn up on no notice" is a key aspect of the agreement, Butler asserted. "We don't want to telegraph in advance that we're coming."

Inspections are now going on every day in Iraq, although not at the presidential sites. The UN "inspectors" claim that the Iraqi government has "dual use" equipment — machinery capable of producing military as well as civilian goods.

Without presenting any evidence Butler claimed January 26 that the Iraqi government has biological weapons loaded onto missiles that could be on mobile missile launchers and driven away to avoid being hit by bombs. Butler had also claimed that Baghdad was conducting "possible biological testing on human beings" at a prison facility, though other UN officials said his supposed evidence proved nothing.

Washington claims authority to use force

Besides Washington, London is the only other government of the five permanent members of the Security Council that supports White House claims that it already has the authority to use military force. Paris, Beijing, and Moscow — all of which have veto power in the Security Council — opposed any resolution explicitly granting Washington the authority to resort to automatic military action. "We consider that automatic action is not acceptable," French president Jacques Chirac told the French daily *Le Monde*. "The Security Council should debate" any plans for military action, he added.

The Russian foreign ministry insisted that the UN document was "not an automatic green light to use force."

The White House argues the opposite and has made clear its determination to press ahead unilaterally with its military operation, regardless of what the governments of France, Russia, and China say. "This gives the green light to our policy of diplomacy and force," declared U.S. ambassador to the UN William Richardson. He said the UN resolution "did not preclude the unilateral use of force."

U.S. state department spokesman Rubin asserted March 2 that in "private discussions" U.S. officials have gained "assurances from key governments, including those who are on the Security Council, that they would be more supportive of that [military] action if Iraq were to violate this agreement. We've made clear, we don't see the need to return to the Security Council if there is a violation of this agreement."

Meanwhile, Washington plans to maintain its massive arsenal of 36,000 troops, 400 warplanes, and dozens of ships indefinitely, ready for a military onslaught against the Iraqi people.

The public debate among U.S. ruling circles over the aims and methods of the military operation in advancing Washington's interests has continued.

"We have to have a long-term effort to overthrow him [Iraqi president Saddam Hussein]," said Senator John McCain. "It's our goal to remove him from power."

U.S. Senate majority Leader Trent Lott, who denounced the UN agreement, said the Clinton administration's policy of "containment doesn't seem to get what we want."

The February 26 *Wall Street Journal* suggested several options, including "using Army Special Forces or other irregular troops to conduct hit-and-run raids deep inside Iraqi territory."

Cat vote: a victory for labor

Continued from front page

Parcel Service strikers," trumpeted the same *New York Times* article quoted above, as if the contract was a done deal.

Most important, the rejected contract is a signal to the heavy equipment giant and to other capitalist employers that human dignity and solidarity mean something to working people.

UAW member David Schmidgall summed it up: "The main issue is the illegally terminated, not wages or pensions. This has been the issue from the beginning."

The return of all the "illegally terminated" workers and opposition to dropping more than 400 unfair labor practice charges — what Caterpillar, the capitalist media, and UAW officials called "emotional issues" — became the cement that held the UAW rank and file together. The vote results were a vote for solidarity and labor's time-honored principle: an injury to one is an injury to all. It came from the head and the heart.

UAW workers delivered a blow to the world's biggest

maker of construction equipment, a company that has bragged for years about its record profits. It is a "mean-spirited company" that is profoundly hated by the workers who toil in the factories. As one UAW worker who had been fired by Caterpillar put it, "I'll fight Caterpillar until the day I die."

The UAW officialdom, which endorsed the contract and campaigned for it, was also surprised. Before the vote, UAW vice president Richard Shoemaker said, "We are confident it will be ratified by our members." Shoemaker was wrong. Once word got out that the contract meant surrendering to Caterpillar's terms, rank-and-file militants began organizing other workers to vote "No." This effort was decisive and was the main factor in pushing Caterpillar back.

Caterpillar workers should be proud of what they accomplished. By taking the moral high ground and not surrendering to Caterpillar's dictates, workers there have set an example for all of labor. Rejecting the contract puts all workers in a stronger position to fight.

Meatpackers in Canada reject buyout deal

BY VICKY MERCIER
AND ROSEMARY RAY

HAMILTON, Ontario — More than 200 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) on strike against Maple Leaf Foods and their supporters rallied on the steps of Hamilton City Hall February 22. Hosted by the Hamilton and District Labor Council, the rally drew supporters from the auto workers, firefighters, steelworkers, and nurses unions in this industrial city 30 miles west of Toronto.

Locked-out UFCW members from the Stoney Creek Maple Leaf plant jumped onto the speakers' platform yelling "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Michael McCain has got to go." McCain, the owner of Maple Leaf Foods, is demanding 40 percent wage cuts, the introduction of part-time work, and other concessions that more than 2,300 UFCW members in four plants across Canada refuse to accept.

Richard Pollock, a member of the UFCW negotiating committee explained McCain's latest buyout offer to the strikers — a cash offer of Can\$50 (Can\$1 = US\$0.70) for every month of service with full seniority. "McCain says he'll close the Burlington plant if we don't accept the buyout," Pollock said. "If we sell off our jobs McCain will hire 600 new workers for \$8 an hour — he can close the plant before the union would ever accept this."

After several labor officials pledged their support to the strikers, the rally participants stepped off to march to the Copps Coliseum to attend a minor league hockey game. As thousands of hockey fans looked up in the bleachers, the strikers held up large individual letters that read "Boycott Maple Leaf Products."

McCain has put his buyout offer on the table and a union meeting has been called for March 5 where UFCW officials have said they will recommend a no vote. This new contract proposal was a hot topic of debate at the rally. Albert Mota, a striker with 19 years of experience at the Burlington plant, said the buyout will enable McCain "to replace us with part-time workers." Mota is

going to vote against the offer and said, "McCain is trying to divide our people with this buyout."

John Continelli, who has worked on the cut line at Burlington for the last 28 years, said categorically, "No way I will accept the buyout! McCain will never close the Burlington plant. He will lose a fortune. Burlington is the flagship plant — he's invested \$70 million to make it the most modern hog processing plant in Canada."

Dan Chapman who also works on the cut line said, "There is a split on the picket line as to whether to accept the buyout plan."

Chapman says he will vote no because if workers accept the offer "that means we are voting yes to the 40 percent wage cut." Chapman, who is talking to many of his co-strikers urging them to vote no said, "The future of all unions is on the line here — once you let the pebble drop in the water it touches everyone."

The youthful contingent of locked-out workers from the Stoney Creek plant, with their faces brightly painted, had plastered themselves from head to toe with "Boycott Maple Leaf" stickers. They said that their base rate is CAN\$10.90. While the company is not demanding a wage-cut at their plant, it wants to turn 40 percent of their jobs into part-time work.

The day after the rally Maple Leaf spokesperson Linda Smith declared in a Canadian



Steelworkers drove to Burlington, Ontario, February 21 in solidarity with striking meatpackers at Maple Leaf.

state that Canadian farmers prefer to sell their hogs to U.S. processors, who are able to pay them more for their hogs because they pay lower wages to the workers in the meatpacking plants there.

Kip Connelly, representing the UFCW in the same radio interview with Smith, said Canadian meatpackers would not settle for lower wages like those paid in the United States.

"Dropping the base rate from \$16.58 to \$10 is not fair," he said.

Linda Smith ended the radio interview by stating, "The UFCW can run these ads for the next five years but the Burlington plant will not reopen at the current wage levels."

As part of their propaganda campaign against the strike Maple Leaf continues to gloat about the jobs it will create at the new plant it is building in Brandon, Manitoba, which will be completed in 1999 and that the company says will be the most efficient hog-processing plant in North America.

While the company continues with its hard-line stance against the strike, it still faces strikers like Maria Oliveria from the Burlington plant. She told *Militant* reporters at the Hamilton rally, "I'm not accepting the buyout. It would mean going back to the pay we earned 18 years ago."

Vicky Mercier is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

Quebec Machinists turn lockout into strike

BY GRANT HARGRAVE

MONTREAL — The workers at Peerless Luminaires in the Montreal suburb of Lasalle have been on the picket line since January 28. The company originally locked out the 110 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local Lodge 2133, but the workers decided to turn the lockout into a strike by an almost unanimous vote. They are picketing the lighting fixtures plant for three shifts a day, five days a week.

Abel Vaz, vice president of the lodge, said, "The company wants to throw the working conditions that we fought 25 years to win into the garbage." Concessions that the company is demanding include cutting salaries to what they were in 1995, which will mean an average loss of \$1.45 per hour; taking away paid holidays; attacking seniority provisions in the contract; and the loss of one week of vacation for some workers.

Suzanne Lamarche, who was the union president during the last strike in 1979, explained how the company has consciously

hired different groups of immigrants in an attempt to divide workers. When a wave of Vietnamese, who spoke neither French nor English, were hired the union used translators in its meetings to draw them in. Lamarche said that the company has threatened not to hire any more Blacks or women because they "demand too much."

Because the company president has a Filipina maid she decided to hire Filipinos thinking they would be docile. But that backfired too; the Filipinos are on the picket line with the others, Lamarche added. Up to 19 languages are spoken in the plant by workers coming from Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, and Latin America, as well as many Quebecois.

During the strike the company has forced the office workers, who are not unionized, to work in the plant with foremen to maintain about 30 percent of production. Only two union members have crossed the picket line. Provocations by the company increased in the months leading up to the lockout. Sev-

eral workers expressed the opinion that the new personnel manager, who they refer to as the "pit bull," was brought in to break the union.

The parking lot that borders the picket line is patrolled by security guards who film everything, including any visitors. Despite this and the winter weather, workers react with humor and spirit. They have a spot light, which they turn on the security guards' cameras and flash at bosses who leave the plant in the evening. Freda, a young Haitian worker, was offering the security guards dog biscuits during a visit by *Militant* correspondents.

Workers are settling in for a long strike. The government conciliator accused the company of not negotiating seriously. The next negotiating session is scheduled for March 3.

Grant Hargrave is a member of IAM Local Lodge 1758. Michel Prairie and Simon Beaudoin contributed to this article.

from Pathfinder

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Fred Halstead

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LETTERS

On the workers states

I found the article in a recent issue of your paper reporting on the 1997 SWP Convention very informative. One assertion contained in this report, however, I found a little disturbing. That was the proposition allegedly adopted by the party that nowhere in Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union has capitalism been restored. This view seems to blatantly fly in the face of reality. It was disappointing that no analysis accompanied this bald assertion explaining why the party thinks this.

It seems to me that there is, if not overwhelming, substantial evidence available to us to support the idea that in fact that is exactly what has happened. Every day we see the media talk about how new corporations are opening up operations there — we all know about the Moscow stock market, etc. The collapse of the Soviet government, an event of world-historical importance, seems at least on its face, as the end of working-class political

power, which has in its turn fueled the reactionary social transformation that are occurring. It's also clear that a new class or property owners — many owning substantial amounts of "social" property, has emerged.

It seems to me that part of the "economic boom" that is occurring now is the result of the opening up of these "new markets" in Eastern Europe and Russia. I look forward to seeing this analysis in your paper and on the Internet. Whether exactly "correct" or not, it can only help to further develop a discussion leading to a greater awareness of this important issue.

Tom Green
San Francisco, California

Don't align with Hussein

The workers of the world should not be so quick to align themselves with Saddam Hussein. His Stalinist regime has used chemical weapons on his own people and Iran.

It is true that the reasons the United States is attacking Iraq is for oil (money) and to "set into power a client regime subservient to the interests of the 60 families that rule the U.S." The working class should protest Saddam Hussein's Stalinist regime, the United States, as well as Russia. Russia's only reason for wanting Hussein to remain in power is to sell Iraq (Saddam) more weapons, with the money from oil sales to the United States. Again it's the workers of the world we should align with — not the ruling classes.

J.R.
Seattle, Washington

U.S. wants Iraqi oil

In addition to the *Militant*'s correct analysis that the U.S. government wants a protectorate (a government Washington can control) in Baghdad, the U.S. capitalists clearly want to tap into the huge Iraqi oil reserves. The two go hand in hand.

In a lead article in the February

23 *Wall Street Journal*, the author quotes an unnamed U.S. State Department official saying "Clearly there is an interest in Iranian and Iraqi oil, but some of those nations that are less vigilant than we are on containment are motivated by commercial interests."

The Persian Gulf countries have oil reserves that could account for half of the world's production within 15 years. Iraq has known reserves of 112 billion barrels and probable additional fields of 215 billion barrels. Saudi Arabia has known reserves of 250 billion barrels. The U.S. government has promoted oil reserves in the Caspian Sea area (countries like Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) with U.S. and European countries already planning pipelines. However, these reserves are nowhere near the size of the Middle East and the Caspian Sea area is politically unstable according to the article.

To sum it up, the *Journal* notes that "so far the losers in Iraq are oil

companies from the United States and Britain — which shares Washington's hard line toward Iraq — the very countries that may end up leading the bombing" there.

Oil companies from France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands and Russia (but not the U.S. and Britain) already have billions invested in the Iraqi oil fields and are thus urging an end to the sanctions that have limited Iraqi oil exports. Their economic interests, clearly counterposed to those of the United States and Britain, intensifies the capitalist competition amongst the international oil companies that can lead to war.

Mark Friedman
Los Angeles, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Dock workers in Australia protest employer's union-busting moves

BY BOB AIKEN
AND LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia — Some 170 dock workers, members of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) on the Webb Dock in Port Melbourne, Victoria, ended a two-and-a-half-week strike February 16 against the use of nonunion labor on the wharf.

The strike began after Patrick, one of the two main stevedoring companies in Australia, announced it was leasing a wharf at its Webb Dock to Producers and Consumers Stevedoring (PCS), a company set up by the National Farmers Federation (NFF). The NFF is dominated by large capitalist farmers and has a history of union-busting operations. NFF president and PCS chairman Donald McGauchie signaled a showdown between the bosses and the union, declaring January 28 that there should be "absolutely no doubt, that we will use the full force of the law to be allowed to run a lawful business." By breaking the MUA's closed shop on the waterfront, PCS aimed to cut stevedoring costs by 50 percent, he asserted.

On January 28, 60 security guards hired by Patrick and PCS were brought on the wharf. Following a sit-in strike by 35 dock workers, known here as "wharfies," the MUA members on the Webb Dock were locked out. A picket line was set up immediately, with angry confrontations for several days between the guards and pickets.

Once equipment was shifted onto the dock, Patrick withdrew its security guards, unlocked the gates and demanded a return to work. PCS security remained in place. The Australian Industrial Relations Commission issued a return to work order on February 13. On February 16, as Webb Dock workers returned to work, some 300 MUA members employed by Patrick on the East Swanson Dock at Port Melbourne called a snap 48-hour protest strike to protest the Patrick-PCS operation. A second 48-hour protest strike was called there February 19.

The Victorian Supreme Court granted Patrick an injunction February 23 against any further strike action by the MUA in Melbourne. Twenty strikebreakers, working under individual contracts, began training at the PCS dock February 23 after being brought to the dock "commando-style," by speedboat. This is the first nonunion labor on the Australian waterfront in decades.

Dock workers are now preparing for more "protected" — that is legal — action against the company at other ports across Australia where the MUA is negotiating new enterprise agreements (contracts) with Patrick and other stevedoring companies.

Prime Minister John Howard has backed this union-busting drive, declaring, on February 29, "The only people talking confrontation, the only people behaving like bullies, are the MUA. We are not. All we have done is to change the law and to say that it is lawful for somebody to use nonunion labor on the Australian waterfront."

An editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald*

said January 30, reflecting big-business backing for the attack on the MUA, claimed that the "move to break the MUA's monopoly on the waterfront is a clear-cut case where Australia's national interests are at stake." Howard cites the same "national interest" as the reason for sending Australian troops to join the U.S.-led war against Iraq.

Attacks on the MUA and the coal miners in the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, another key industrial union, have been central in a broader offensive on union rights carried out by the Howard government since it came to office in March 1996. The Minister for Workplace Relations, Peter Reith, boasted February 17 that "I've been up to my neck...in promoting...waterfront reform," the bosses' code word for an attack on the MUA.

Reith has been pushing for a stevedoring company to run a nonunion operation and to take on the MUA. An attempt to do this in Cairns, Queensland, in September 1997 was pushed back by the MUA, with the backing of the International Transport Federation.

In December 1997 an attempt to secretly train — in the Persian Gulf port of Dubai — a strikebreaking force to operate on the wharves in Australia turned into a fiasco and was abandoned after being brought to light



Striking unionists confront security guards at Webb Dock in Melbourne, Australia, January 29.

by the MUA. Drawn from ex-Australian army personnel, and from active-duty soldiers granted long-term leave from the army, some of the "Dubai strikebreakers" are reportedly among those on the Webb Dock.

As the Webb Dock strike unfolded, it became clear that talks between the NFF, Patrick, and the federal government on a union-busting campaign had been going for many months. The chairman of Patrick, Christopher Corrigan, retracted previous denials about his involvement in the Dubai scheme and also admitted that he had taken

part in discussions with government consultants about sacking MUA members "en masse" in the event of a national strike.

Reith has announced that the government had offered to fund termination payments.

During the Webb Dock strike the New Zealand Waterfront Workers' Union voiced its solidarity with the MUA. It has condemned offers being made to New Zealand dock workers by PCS of A\$25,000 US\$16,500 for three months' work in their scab operation on the Webb Dock.

Some 3,000 wharfies and supporters rallied outside the state Parliament in Melbourne February 10, following a union stop-work meeting, to protest the NFF's union-busting operation. A rally in the Sydney Town Hall February 9, part of a series of protest stop-work meetings called by the MUA across the country that day, drew nearly 2,000, as Sydney MUA members and families were joined by busloads of dock workers from Newcastle and Port Kembla, and other unionists, who marched on the Patrick offices in downtown Sydney.

Several rank-and-file dock workers took the microphone at the end of the Sydney march to answer the bosses' claims about "high-paid wharfies," pointing to the long hours they worked. Two spoke out about the common interests of workers and small farmers. One described the NFF as standing for "No Family Farms."

A contingent of about 50 miners from Rio Tinto's Mount Thorley mine in the Hunter Valley some 150 miles north of Sydney took part in the rally and march. They are on strike over Rio Tinto's provocative decision to break the enterprise agreement at the mine and ignore seniority in a layoff of 230 miners. During the protest they invited union members to visit their picket line.

Bob Aiken and Linda Harris are members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union.

Liverpool dockers end 28-month fight

BY DEBBIE DELANGE
AND PAUL DAVIES

LIVERPOOL, England — After nearly two-and-a-half years of struggle to regain their jobs, some 300 dock workers here voted at the end of January to end their fight and accept a settlement of £28,000 (\$46,760) each. This buyout offer is not being made to an additional 80 dockers who worked for the Torside company, and were also a part of the struggle.

The dockers' fight began in September 1995, in response to the employers' offensive against the dockers' rights on the job and attempts to use more "casual" workers. Some 80 young workers were fired at Torside for refusing to work beyond overtime agreements. Hundreds of other dock workers were locked out and then fired by the Mersey Docks and Harbours Co. for refusing to cross unofficial picket lines set up by the sacked Torside workers. They immediately organized picket lines and support to demand their jobs back. They fought to win the officialdom of their union, the Transport & General Workers Union (TGWU), to make their fight official internationally.

The dispute began a few years after a major assault on the unions on the docks. In 1989 the government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had abolished the National Dock Labour Scheme, which forced employers to hire dockers who had been laid off by other dock companies. This opened the door for selective compulsory layoffs, which were used to get rid of trade union activists and older workers.

Liverpool was the one of the only ports in Britain to retain trade union recognition after 1989. Throughout the dispute that be-

gan in 1995, the dockers held weekly mass meetings to discuss the fight, hear international speakers, and vote on whether to continue. Among many other guests, they opened their meeting last November to Norberto Codina, a Cuban poet and editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, the magazine of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba.

The fight had an impact on many workers around the world, with solidarity strike action being organized in several countries, including the United States and Australia. No action was organized to back the Liverpool dockers at other ports in the United Kingdom, however, and the fight took place when there wasn't a broader rise in sustained union struggles. "We had marvelous support, but it wasn't enough; we needed action," explained Val Bibby, a member of Women of the Waterfront — a group set up by women family members to win support for the dockers' struggle.

Jimmy Davies, secretary of the shop stewards committee, said several factors influenced the decision to end the fight. Support from dockers in other countries was becoming more difficult to sustain, he said. In particular, officials of the New York-based International Longshoremen's Association, having faced down a \$1.5 million law suit for their action in support of the Liverpool men, were unwilling to continue such action. He also pointed to lack of support in the form of major union struggles in Liverpool and the fact that some 80 dockers had individually accepted the company's latest offer. In December the TGWU executive committee decided not to discuss how the union could give backing to the dock workers' fight. "We fought as long as we

could. We make no apologies. We couldn't take the fight further," said Davies. He spoke at a meeting called to explain the decision to end the dispute to activists from around the country who had organized dockers support groups. Doreen McNally of Women of the Waterfront reviewed their second year of struggle in *Dockers Charter*, official publication of the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards Committee. We "had to learn a lot and to learn fast," she wrote, describing how WOW members would speak alongside dockers delegates at meetings and rallies around the UK and the world. They visited France on 10 different occasions.

"Everyone is still in shock," said Bibby. "There's four generations of history on the dock — we don't intend to leave our heritage to scabs." Jimmy Nolan, chairman of the shop stewards committee, indicated that the union officials were discussing proposals to set up a business to provide a labor supply agency to the employers.

Many workers across Britain followed the progress of the dispute. At the second anniversary rally last September, trade unionists from around the country marched in Liverpool to show their support for the fight for reinstatement. Vince Niles, a worker at the Wylex engineering plant in nearby Manchester, commented, "Many people find themselves in casual jobs with temporary contracts, and feel they have to accept these conditions. The Liverpool dockers stood and fought, their struggle summed up the fight against casual labor."

Paul Davies is a member of Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union in Manchester.

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